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# SICILIAN ROMANCE.

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# SICILIAN ROMANCE.

BY THE AUTHORESS OF THE

CASTLES OF ATHLIN AND DUNBAYNE.

3719

IN TWO VOLUMES.

THE SECOND EDITION.

VOLUME I.

*"I could a Tale unfold."*

LONDON:

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# SICILIAN ROMANCE.

ON the northern ſhore of Sicily are ſtill to be ſeen the magnificent remains of a caſtle, which formerly belonged to the noble houſe of Mazzini. It ſtands in the centre of a ſmall bay, and upon a gentle acclivity, which, on one ſide, ſlopes towards the ſea, and on the other riſes into an eminence crowned by dark woods. The ſituation is admirably beautiful and pictureſque, and the ruins have an air of ancient grandeur, which, contraſted with the preſent ſolitude of the ſcene, impreſſes the traveller with awe and curioſity. During my travels abroad I viſited this ſpot. As I walked over the looſe fragments

of ſtone, which lay ſcattered through the immenſe area of the fabrick, and ſurveyed the ſublimity and grandeur of the ruins, I recurred, by a natural aſſociation of ideas, to the times when theſe walls ſtood proudly in their original ſplendour, when the halls were the ſcenes of hoſpitality and feſtive magnificence, and when they reſounded with the voices of thoſe whom death had long ſince ſwept from the earth. "Thus," ſaid I, "ſhall the preſent generation—he who now ſinks in miſery—and he who now ſwims in pleaſure, alike paſs away and be forgotten." My heart ſwelled with the reflection; and, as I turned from the ſcene with a ſigh, I fixed my eyes upon a friar, whoſe venerable figure, gently bending towards the earth, formed no unintereſting object in the picture. He obſerved my emotion; and, as my eye met his, ſhook his head and pointed to the ruin. "Theſe walls," ſaid he, "were once the ſeat of luxury and

and vice. They exhibited a ſingular inſtance of the retribution of Heaven, and were from that period forſaken, and abandoned to decay." His words excited my curioſity, and I enquired further concerning their meaning.

" A ſolemn hiſtory belongs to this caſtle," ſaid he, " which is too long and intricate for me to relate. It is, however, contained in a manuſcript in our library, of which I could, perhaps, procure you a ſight. A brother of our order, a deſcendant of the noble houſe of Mazzini, collected and recorded the moſt ſtriking incidents relating to his family, and the hiſtory thus formed, he left as a legacy to our convent. If you pleaſe, we will walk thither."

I accompanied him to the convent, and the friar introduced me to his ſuperior, a man of an intelligent mind and benevolent heart, with whom I paſſed ſome hours in intereſting converſation. I believe my ſentiments pleaſed him;

for by his indulgence, I was permitted to take abſtracts of the hiſtory before me, which, with ſome further particulars obtained in converſation with the abate, I have arranged in the following pages.

CHAP.

## CHAPTER I.

TOWARDS the cloſe of the ſixteenth century, this caſtle was in the poſſeſſion of Ferdinand, fifth marquis of Mazzini, and was for ſome years the principal reſidence of his family. He was a man of a voluptuous and imperious character. To his firſt wife, he married Louiſa Bernini, ſecond daughter of the count della Salario, a lady yet more diſtinguiſhed for the ſweetneſs of her manners and the gentleneſs of her diſpoſition, than for her beauty. She brought the marquis one ſon and two daughters, who loſt their amiable mother in early childhood. The arrogant and impetuous character of the marquis, operated powerfully upon the mild and ſuſceptible nature of his lady; and it was by many perſons believed, that his unkindneſs and neglect put a period to her life.

However this might be, he ſoon afterwards married Maria de Vellorno, a young lady eminently beautiful, but of a character very oppoſite to that of her predeceſſor. She was a woman of infinite art, devoted to pleaſure, and of an unconquerable ſpirit. The marquis, whoſe heart was dead to paternal tenderneſs, and whoſe preſent lady was too volatile to attend to domeſtic concerns, committed the education of his daughters to the care of a lady, completely qualified for the undertaking, and who was diſtantly related to the late marchioneſs.

He quitted Mazzini ſoon after his ſecond marriage, for the gaieties and ſplendour of Naples, whither his ſon accompanied him. Though naturally of a haughty and overbearing diſpoſition, he was governed by his wife. His paſſions were vehement, and ſhe had the addreſs to bend them to her own purpoſe;

poſe; and ſo well to conceal her influence, that he thought himſelf moſt independent when he was moſt enſlaved. He paid an annual viſit to the caſtle of Mazzini; but the marchioneſs ſeldom attended him, and he ſtaid only to give ſuch general directions concerning the education of his daughters, as his pride, rather than his affection, ſeemed to dictate.

Emilia, the elder, inherited much of her mother's diſpoſition. She had a mild and ſweet temper, united with a clear and comprehenſive mind. Her younger ſiſter, Julia, was of a more lively caſt. An extreme ſenſibility ſubjected her to frequent uneaſineſs; her temper was warm, but generous; ſhe was quickly irritated, and quickly appeaſed; and to a reproof, however gentle, ſhe would often weep, but was never ſullen. Her imagination was ardent, and her mind early exhibited ſymp-

toms of genius. It was the particular care of madame de Menon to counteract thoſe traits in the diſpoſition of her young pupils, which appeared inimical to their future happineſs; and for this taſk ſhe had abilities which entitled her to hope for ſucceſs. A ſeries of early misfortunes had entendered her heart, without weakening the powers of her underſtanding. In retirement ſhe had acquired tranquillity, and had almoſt loſt the conſciouſneſs of thoſe ſorrows which yet threw a ſoft and not unpleaſing ſhade over her character. She loved her young charge with maternal fondneſs, and their gradual improvement and reſpectful tenderneſs repaid all her anxiety. Madame excelled in muſic and drawing. She had often forgot her ſorrows in theſe amuſements, when her mind was too much occupied to derive conſolation from books, and ſhe was aſſiduous to impart to Emilia and Julia a power ſo valuable as that of beguiling

ing the ſenſe of affliction. Emilia's taſte led her to drawing, and ſhe ſoon made rapid advances in that art. Julia was uncommonly ſuſceptible of the charms of harmony. She had ſeelings which trembled in uniſon to all its various and enchanting powers.

The inſtructions of madame ſhe caught with aſtoniſhing quickneſs, and in a ſhort time attained to a degree of excellence in her favourite ſtudy, which few perſons have ever exceeded. Her manner was entirely her own. It was not in the rapid intricacies of execution, that ſhe excelled ſo much in as in that delicacy of taſte, and in thoſe enchanting powers of expreſſion, which ſeem to breathe a ſoul through the ſound, and which take captive the heart of the hearer. The lute was her favourite inſtrument, and its tender notes accorded well with the ſweet and melting tones of her voice.

The caſtle of Mazzini was a large ir-

regular fabrick, and ſeemed ſuited to receive a numerous train of followers, ſuch as, in thoſe days, ſerved the nobility, either in the ſplendour of peace, or the turbulence of war. Its preſent family inhabited only a ſmall part of it; and even this part appeared forlorn and almoſt deſolate from the ſpaciouſneſs of the apartments, and the length of the galleries which led to them. A melancholy ſtillneſs reigned through the halls, and the ſilence of the courts, which were ſhaded by high turrets, was for many hours together undiſturbed by the ſound of any foot-ſtep. Julia, who diſcovered an early taſte for books, loved to retire in an evening to a ſmall cloſet in which ſhe had collected her favourite authors. This room formed the weſtern angle of the caſtle: one of its windows looked upon the ſea, beyond which was faintly ſeen, ſkirting the horizon, the dark rocky coaſt of Calabria; the other opened towards a part

part of the caſtle, and afforded a proſpect of the neighbouring woods. Her muſical inſtruments were here depoſited, with whatever aſſiſted her favourite amuſements. This ſpot, which was at once elegant, pleaſant, and retired, was embelliſhed with many little ornaments of her own invention, and with ſome drawings executed by her ſiſter. The cloſet was adjoining her chamber, and was ſeparated from the apartments of madame, only by a ſhort gallery. This gallery opened into another, long and winding, which led to the grand ſtaircaſe, terminating in the north hall, with which the chief apartments of the north ſide of the edifice communicated.

Madame de Menon's apartment opened into both galleries. It was in one of theſe rooms that ſhe uſually ſpent the mornings, occupied in the improvement of her young charge. The windows looked towards the ſea, and the room was light and pleaſant. It was

their cuſtom to dine in one of the lower apartments, and at table they were always joined by a dependant of the marquis's, who had reſided many years in the caſtle, and who inſtructed the young ladies in the Latin tongue, and in geography. During the fine evenings of ſummer, this little party frequently ſupped in a pavilion, which was built on an eminence in the woods belonging to the caſtle. From this ſpot the eye had an almoſt boundleſs range of ſea and land. It commanded the ſtraits of Meſſina, with the oppoſite ſhores of Calabria, and a great extent of the wild and pictureſque ſcenery of Sicily. Mount Etna, crowned with eternal ſnows, and ſhooting from among the clouds, formed a grand and ſublime picture in the back ground of the ſcene. The city of Palermo was alſo diſtinguiſhable; and Julia, as ſhe gazed on its glittering ſpires, would endeavour in imagination to depicture its beau-

beauties, while ſhe ſecretly ſighed for a view of that world, from which ſhe had hitherto been ſecluded by the mean jealouſy of the marchioneſs, upon whoſe mind the dread of rival beauty operated ſtrongly to the prejudice of Emilia and Julia. She employed all her influence over the marquis to detain them in retirement; and, though Emilia was now twenty, and her ſiſter eighteen, they had never paſſed the boundaries of their father's domains.

Vanity often produces unreaſonable alarm; but the marchioneſs had in this inſtance juſt grounds for apprehenſion; the beauty of her lord's daughters has ſeldom been exceeded. The perſon of Emilia was finely proportioned. Her complexion was fair, her hair flaxen, and her dark blue eyes were full of ſweet expreſſion. Her manners were dignified and elegant, and in her air was a feminine ſoftneſs, a tender timidity, which irreſiſtibly attracted the heart of the beholder. The figure of Julia was

light

ſight and graceful—her ſtep was airy—her mien animated, and her ſmile enchanting. Here eyes were dark, and full of fire, but tempered with modeſt ſweetneſs. Her features were finely turned—every laughing grace played round her mouth, and her countenance quickly diſcovered all the various emotions of her ſoul. The dark auburn hair which curled in beautiful profuſion in her neck, gave a finiſhing charm to her appearance.

Thus lovely, and thus veiled in obſcurity, were the daughters of the noble Mazzini. But they were happy, for they knew not enough of the world ſeriouſly to regret the want of its enjoyments, though Julia would ſometimes ſigh for the airy image which her fancies painted, and a painful curioſity would ariſe concerning the buſy ſcenes from which ſhe was excluded. A return to her cuſtomary amuſements, however, would chaſe the ideal image

from

from her mind, and reſtore her uſual happy complacency. Books, muſic, and painting, divided the hours of her leiſure, and many beautiful ſummer evenings were ſpent in the pavillion, where the refined converſation of madame, the poetry of Taſſo, the lute of Julia, and the friendſhip of Emilia, combined to form a ſpecies of happineſs, ſuch as elevated and highly ſuſceptible minds are alone capable of receiving or communicating. Madame underſtood and practiſed all the graces of converſation, and her young pupils perceived its value, and caught the ſpirit of its character.

Converſation may be divided into two claſſes—the familiar and the ſentimental. It is the province of the familiar, to diffuſe chearfulneſs and eaſe—to open the heart of man to man, and to beam a temperate ſunſhine upon the mind.—Nature and art muſt conſpire to render us ſuſceptible of the charms, and to qualify

qualify us for the practice of the ſecond claſs of converſation, here termed ſentimental, and in which madame de Menon particularly excelled. To good ſenſe, lively feeling, and natural delicacy of taſte, muſt be united an expanſion of mind, and a refinement of thought, which is the reſult of high cultivation. To render this ſort of converſation irreſiſtibly attractive, a knowledge of the world is requiſite, and that enchanting eaſe, that elegance of manner, which is to be acquired only by frequenting the higher circles of poliſhed life. In ſentimental converſation, ſubjects intereſting to the heart, and to the imagination, are brought forward; they are diſcuſſed in a kind of ſportive way, with animation and refinement, and are never continued longer than politeneſs allows. Here fancy flouriſhes,—the ſenſibilities expand—and wit, guided by delicacy and embelliſhed by taſte—points to the heart.

Such

Such was the converſation of madame de Menon; and the pleaſant gaiety of the pavillion ſeemed peculiarly to adapt it for the ſcene of ſocial delights. On the evening of a very ſultry day, having ſupped in their favourite ſpot, the coolneſs of the hour, and the beauty of the night, tempted this happy party to remain there later than uſual. Returning home, they were ſurpriſed by the appearance of a light through the broken window-ſhutters of an apartment, belonging to a diviſion of the caſtle which had for many years been ſhut up. They ſtopped to obſerve it, when it ſuddenly diſappeared, and was ſeen no more. Madame de Menon, diſturbed at this phænomenon, haſtened into the caſtle, with a view of enquiring into the cauſe of it, when ſhe was met in the north hall by Vincent. She related to him what ſhe had ſeen, and ordered an immediate ſearch to be made for the keys of thoſe apartments. She apprehended

hended that ſome perſon had penetrated that part of the edifice with an intention of plunder; and, diſdaining a paltry fear where her duty was concerned, ſhe ſummoned the ſervants of the caſtle, with an intention of accompanying them thither. Vincent ſmiled at her apprehenſions, and imputed what ſhe had ſeen to an illuſion, which the ſolemnity of the hour had impreſſed upon her fancy. Madame, however, perſevered in her purpoſe; and, after a long and repeated ſearch, a maſſey key, covered with ruſt, was produced. She then proceeded to the ſouthern ſide of the edifice, accompanied by Vincent, and followed by the ſervants, who were agitated with impatient wonder. The key was applied to an iron gate, which opened into a court that ſeparated this diviſion from the other parts of the caſtle. They entered this court, which was overgrown with graſs and weeds, and aſcended ſome ſteps that led to a large door, which

which they vainly endeavoured to open. All the different keys of the caſtle were applied to the lock, without effect, and they were at length compelled to quit the place, without having either ſatiſfied their curioſity, or quieted their fears. Every thing, however, was ſtill, and the light did not re-appear. Madame concealed her apprehenſions, and the family retired to reſt.

This circumſtance dwelt on the mind of madame de Menon, and it was ſome time before ſhe ventured again to ſpend an evening in the pavillion. After ſeveral months paſſed, without further diſturbance or diſcovery, another occurrence renewed the alarm. Julia had one night remained in her cloſet later than uſual. A favourite book had engaged her attention beyond the hour of cuſtomary repoſe, and every inhabitant of the caſtle, except herſelf, had long been loſt in ſleep. She was rouſed from her forgetfulneſs, by the ſound of the caſtle

caſtle clock, which ſtruck one. Surpriſed at the lateneſs of the hour, ſhe roſe in haſte, and was moving to her chamber, when the beauty of the night attracted her to the window. She opened it; and obſerving a fine effect of moon-light upon the dark woods, leaned forwards. In that ſituation ſhe had not long remained, when ſhe perceived a light faintly flaſh through a caſement in the uninhabited part of the caſtle. A ſudden tremor ſeized her, and ſhe with difficulty ſupported herſelf. In a few moments it diſappeared, and ſoon after a figure, bearing a lamp, proceeded from an obſcure door belonging to the ſouth tower; and ſtealing along the outſide of the caſtle walls, turned round the ſouthern angle, by which it was afterwards hid from the view. Aſtoniſhed and terrified at what ſhe had ſeen, ſhe hurried to the apartment of madame de Menon, and related the circumſtance. The ſervants were immediately

diately rouſed, and the alarm became general. Madame aroſe and deſcended into the north hall, where the domeſtics were already aſſembled. No one could be found of courage ſufficient to enter into the courts; and the orders of madame were diſregarded, when oppoſed to the effects of ſuperſtitious terror. She perceived that Vincent was abſent, but as ſhe was ordering him to be called, he entered the hall. Surpriſed to find the family thus aſſembled, he was told the occaſion. He immediately ordered a party of the ſervants to attend him round the caſtle walls; and with ſome reluctance, and more fear, they obeyed him. They all returned to the hall, without having witneſſed any extraordinary appearance; but though their fears were not confirmed, they were by no means diſſipated. The appearance of a light in a part of the caſtle which had for ſeveral years been ſhut up, and to which time and circumſtance had given

given an air of ſingular deſolation, might reaſonably be ſuppoſed to excite a ſtrong degree of ſurpriſe and terror. In the minds of the vulgar, any ſpecies of the wonderful, is received with avidity; and the ſervants did not heſitate in believing the ſouthern diviſion of the caſtle to be inhabited by a ſupernatural power. Too much agitated to ſleep, they agreed to watch for the remainder of the night. For this purpoſe they arranged themſelves in the eaſt gallery, where they had a view of the ſouth tower from which the light had iſſued. The night, however, paſſed without any further diſturbance; and the morning dawn, which they beheld with inexpreſſible pleaſure, diſſipated for a while the glooms of apprehenſion. But the return of evening renewed the general fear, and for ſeveral ſucceſſive nights the domeſtics watched the ſouthern tower. Although nothing remarkable was ſeen, a report was ſoon raiſed, and believed, that the

ſouthern

ſouthern ſide of the caſtle was haunted. Madame de Menon, whoſe mind was ſuperior to the effects of ſuperſtition, was yet diſturbed and perplexed, and ſhe determined, if the light re-appeared, to inform the marquis of the circumſtance, and requeſt the keys of thoſe apartments.

The marquis, immerſed in the diſſipations of Naples, ſeldom remembered the caſtle, or its inhabitants. His ſon, who had been educated under his immediate care, was the ſole object of his pride, as the marchioneſs was that of his affection. He loved her with romantic fondneſs, which ſhe repaid with ſeeming tenderneſs, and ſecret perfidy. She allowed herſelf a free indulgence in the moſt licentious pleaſures, yet conducted herſelf with an art ſo exquiſite as to elude diſcovery, and even ſuſpicion. In her amours ſhe was equally inconſtant as ardent, till the young count Hippolitus de Vereza attracted her attention. The natural fickleneſs of her

diſpoſition ſeemed then to ceaſe, and upon him ſhe centered all her deſires.

The count Vereza loſt his father in early childhood. He was now of age, and had juſt entered upon the poſſeſſion of his eſtates. His perſon was graceful, yet manly; his mind accompliſhed, and his manners elegant; his countenance expreſſed a happy union of ſpirit, dignity, and benevolence, which formed the principal traits of his character. He had a ſublimity of thought, which taught him to deſpiſe the voluptuous vices of the Neapolitans, and led him to higher purſuits. He was the choſen and early friend of young Ferdinand, the ſon of the marquis, and was a frequent viſitor in the family. When the marchioneſs firſt ſaw him, ſhe treated him with great diſtinction, and at length made ſuch advances, as neither the honour nor the inclinations of the count permitted him to notice. He conducted himſelf toward her with frigid indifference, which ſerved only to inflame

the

the paſſion it was meant to chill. The favours of the marchioneſs had hitherto been ſought with avidity, and accepted with rapture; and the repulſive inſenſibility which ſhe now experienced, rouſed all her pride, and called into action every refinement of coquetry.

It was about this period that Vincent was ſeized with a diſorder which increaſed ſo rapidly, as in a ſhort time to aſſume the moſt alarming appearance. Deſpairing of life, he deſired that a meſſenger might be diſpatched to inform the marquis of his ſituation, and to ſignify his earneſt wiſh to ſee him before he died. The progreſs of his diſorder defied every art of medicine, and his viſible diſtreſs of mind ſeemed to accelerate his fate. Perceiving his laſt hour approaching, he requeſted to have a confeſſor. The confeſſor was ſhut up with him a conſiderable time, and he had already received extreme unction, when madame de Menon was ſummoned to his bed ſide. The hand of death

was now upon him, cold damps hung upon his brows, and he, with difficulty, raiſed his heavy eyes to Madame as ſhe entered the apartment. He beckoned her towards him, and deſiring that no perſon might be permitted to enter the room, was for a few moments ſilent. His mind appeared to labour under oppreſſive remembrances; he made ſeveral attempts to ſpeak, but either reſolution or ſtrength failed him. At length, giving Madame a look of unutterable anguiſh, "Alas, madam," ſaid he, "Heaven grants not the prayer of ſuch a wretch as I am. I muſt expire long before the marquis can arrive. Since I ſhall ſee him no more, I would impart to you a ſecret which lies heavy at my heart, and which makes my laſt moments dreadful, as they are without hope." "Be comforted," ſaid Madame, who was affected by the energy of his manner, "we are taught to believe that forgiveneſs is never denied to ſincere repentance." "You, madam, are ignorant of the enor-

enormity of my crime, and of the ſecret—the horrid ſecret which labours at my breaſt. My guilt is beyond remedy in this world, and I fear will be without pardon in the next; I therefore hope little from confeſſion even to a prieſt. Yet ſome good it is ſtill in my power to do; let me diſcloſe to you that ſecret which is ſo myſteriouſly connected with the ſouthern apartments of this caſtle." "What of them!" exclaimed Madame, with impatience. Vincent returned no anſwer; exhauſted by the effort of ſpeaking, he had fainted. Madame rung for aſſiſtance, and by proper applications, his ſenſes were recalled. He was, however, entirely ſpeechleſs, and in this ſtate he remained till he expired, which was about an hour after he had converſed with Madame.

The perplexity and aſtoniſhment of Madame, were by the late ſcene heightened to a very painful degree. She recollected the various particulars relative to the ſouthern diviſion of the

caſtle, the many years it had ſtood uninhabited—the ſilence which had been obſerved concerning it—the appearance of the light and the figure—the fruitleſs ſearch for the keys, and the reports ſo generally believed; and thus remembrance preſented her with a combination of circumſtances, which ſerved only to increaſe her wonder, and heighten her curioſity. A veil of myſtery enveloped that part of the caſtle, which it now ſeemed impoſſible ſhould ever be penetrated, ſince the only perſon who could have removed it, was no more.

The marquis arrived on the day after that on which Vincent had expired. He came attended by ſervants only, and alighted at the gates of the caſtle with an air of impatience, and a countenance expreſſive of ſtrong emotion. Madame, with the young ladies, received him in the hall. He haſtily ſaluted his daughters, and paſſed on to the oak parlour, deſiring Madame to follow

follow him. She obeyed, and the marquis enquired with great agitation after Vincent. When told of his death, he paced the room with hurried ſteps, and was for ſome time ſilent. At length ſeating himſelf, and ſurveying Madame with a ſcrutinizing eye, he aſked ſome queſtions concerning the particulars of Vincent's death. She mentioned his earneſt deſire to ſee the marquis, and repeated his laſt words. The marquis remained ſilent, and Madame proceeded to mention thoſe circuſtances relative to the ſouthern diviſion of the caſtle, which ſhe thought it of ſo much importance to diſcover. He treated the affair very lightly, laughed at her conjectures, repreſented the appearances ſhe deſcribed as the illuſions of a weak and timid mind, and broke up the converſation, by going to viſit the chamber of Vincent, in which he remained a conſiderable time.

On the following day Emilia and Julia dined with the marquis. He was

gloomy and ſilent; their efforts to amuſe him ſeemed to excite diſpleaſure rather than kindneſs; and when the repaſt was concluded, he withdrew to his own apartment, leaving his daughters in a ſtate of ſorrow and ſurpriſe.

Vincent was to be interred, according to his own deſire, in the church belonging to the convent of St. Nicholas. One of the ſervants, after receiving ſome neceſſary orders concerning the funeral, ventured to inform the marquis of the appearance of the lights in the ſouth tower. He mentioned the ſuperſtitious reports that prevailed amongſt the houſhold, and complained that the ſervants would not croſs the courts after it was dark. "And who is he that has commiſſioned you with this ſtory?" ſaid the marquis, in a tone of diſpleaſure; are the weak and ridiculous fancies of women and ſervants to be obtruded upon my notice? Away—appear no more before me, till you have learned to ſpeak what it is proper for me to hear."

hear." Robert withdrew abaſhed, and it was ſome time before any perſon ventured to renew the ſubject with the marquis.

The majority of young Ferdinand now drew near, and the marquis determined to celebrate the occaſion with feſtive magnificence at the caſtle of Mazzini. He therefore ſummoned the marchioneſs, and his ſon, from Naples, and very ſplendid preparations were ordered to be made. Emelia and Julia dreaded the arrival of the marchioneſs, whoſe influence they had long been ſenſible of, and from whoſe preſence they anticipated a painful reſtraint. Beneath the gentle guidance of Madame de Menon, their hours had paſſed in happy tranquillity, for they were ignorant alike of the ſorrows and the pleaſures of the world. Thoſe did not oppreſs, and theſe did not inflame them. Engaged in the purſuits of knowledge, and in the attainment of elegant accom-

 pliſhments,

pliſhments, their moments flew lightly away, and the flight of time was marked only by improvement. In Madame was united the tenderneſs of the mother, with the ſympathy of a friend; and they loved her with a warm and inviolable affection.

The purpoſed viſit of their brother, whom they had not ſeen for ſeveral years, gave them great pleaſure. Although their minds retained no very diſtinct remembrance of him, they looked forward with eager and delightful expectation to his virtues and his talents; and hoped to find in his company, a conſolation for the uneaſineſs which the preſence of the marchioneſs would excite. Neither did Julia contemplate with indifference the approaching feſtival. A new ſcene was now opening to her, which her young imagination painted in the warm and glowing colours of delight. The near approach of pleaſure frequently awakens the

the heart to emôtions, which would fail to be excited by a more remote and abſtracted obſervance. Julia, who in the diſtance, had conſidered the ſplendid gaieties of life with tranquillity, now lingered with impatient hope through the moments which withheld her from their enjoyments. Emilia, whoſe feelings were leſs lively, and whoſe imagination was leſs powerful, beheld the approaching feſtival with calm conſideration, and almoſt regretted the interruption of thoſe tranquil pleaſures, which ſhe knew to be more congenial with her powers and diſpoſition.

In a few days the marchioneſs arrived at the caſtle. She was followed by a numerous retinue, and accompanied by Ferdinand, and ſeveral of the Italian nobleſſe, whom pleaſure attracted to her train. Her entrance was proclaimed by the ſound of muſic, and thoſe gates which had long ruſted on their hinges, were thrown open to receive her. The

courts and halls, whoſe aſpect ſo lately expreſſed only gloom and deſolation, now ſhone with ſudden ſplendor, and echoed the ſounds of gaiety and gladneſs. Julia ſurveyed the ſcene from an obſcure window; and as the triumphal ſtrains filled the air, her breaſt throbbed, her heart beat quick with joy, and ſhe loſt her apprehenſions from the marchioneſs in a ſort of wild delight hitherto unknown to her. The arrival of the marchioneſs ſeemed indeed the ſignal of univerſal and unlimited pleaſure. When the marquis came out to receive her, the gloom that lately clouded his countenance, broke away in ſmiles of welcome, which the whole company appeared to conſider as invitations to joy.

The tranquil heart of Emilia was not proof againſt a ſcene ſo alluring, and ſhe ſighed at the proſpect, yet ſcarcely knew why. Julia pointed out to her ſiſter, the graceful figure of a young man

man who followed the marchioneſs, and ſhe expreſſed her wiſhes that he might be her brother. From the contemplation of the ſcene before them, they were ſummoned to meet the marchioneſs. Julia trembled with apprehenſion, and for a few moments wiſhed the caſtle was in its former ſtate. As they advanced through the ſaloon, in which they were preſented, Julia was covered with bluſhes; but Emilia, tho' equally timid, preſerved her graceful dignity. The marchioneſs received them with a mingled ſmile of condeſcenſion and politeneſs, and immediately the whole attention of the company was attracted by their elegance and beauty. The eager eyes of Julia ſought in vain to diſcover her brother, of whoſe features ſhe had no recollection in thoſe of any of the perſons then preſent. At length her father preſented him, and ſhe perceived with a ſigh of regret, that he was not the youth ſhe had obſerved

from the window. He advanced with a very engaging air, and ſhe met him with an unfeigned welcome. His figure was tall and majeſtic; he had a very noble and ſpirited carriage; and his countenance expreſſed at once ſweetneſs and dignity. Supper was ſerved in the eaſt hall, and the tables were ſpread with a profuſion of delicacies. A band of muſic played during the repaſt, and the evening concluded with a concert in the ſaloon.

CHAP.

## CHAPTER II.

THE day of the feſtival, ſo long and ſo impatiently looked for by Julia, was now arrived. All the neighbouring nobility were invited, and the gates of the caſtle were thrown open for a general rejoicing. A magnificent entertainment, conſiſting of the moſt luxurious and expenſive diſhes, was ſerved in the halls. Soft muſic floated along the vaulted roofs, the walls were hung with decorations, and it ſeemed as if the hand of a magician had ſuddenly metamorphoſed this once gloomy fabric into the palace of a fairy. The marquis, notwithſtanding the gaiety of the ſcene, frequently appeared abſtracted from its enjoyments, and in ſpite of all his efforts at cheerfulneſs, the melancholy of his heart was viſible in his countenance.

In the evening there was a grand ball:

ball : the marchioneſs, who was ſtill diſtinguiſhed for her beauty, and for the winning elegance of her manners, appeared in the moſt ſplendid attire. Her hair was ornamented with a profuſion of jewels, but was ſo diſpoſed as to give an air rather of voluptuouſneſs, than of grace, to her figure. Although conſcious of her charms, ſhe beheld the beauty of Emilia and Julia with a jealous eye, and was compelled ſecretly to acknowledge, that the ſimple elegance with which they were adorned, was more enchanting than all the ſtudied artifice of ſplendid decoration. They were dreſſed alike in light Sicilian habits, and the beautiful luxuriance of their flowing hair, was reſtrained only by bandellets of pearl. The ball was opened by Ferdinand, and the lady Matilda Conſtanza. Emilia danced with the young marquis della Fazelli, and acquitted herſelf with the eaſe and dignity ſo natural to her. Julia experienced

enced a various emotion of pleaſure and fear when the count de Vereza, in whom ſhe recollected the cavalier ſhe had obſerved from the window, led her forth. The grace of her ſtep, and the elegant ſymmetry of her figure, raiſed in the aſſembly a gentle murmur of applauſe, and the ſoft bluſh which now ſtole over her cheek, gave an additional charm to her appearance. But when the muſic changed, and ſhe danced to the ſoft Sicilian meaſure, the airy grace of her movement, and the unaffected tenderneſs of her air, ſunk attention into ſilence, which continued for ſome time after the dance had ceaſed. The marchioneſs obſerved the general admiration with ſeeming pleaſure, and ſecret uneaſineſs. She had ſuffered a very painful ſolicitude, when the count de Vereza ſelected her for his partner in the dance, and ſhe purſued him through the evening with an eye of jealous ſcrutiny. Her boſom, which before glow-

ed

ed only with love, was now torn by the agitation of other paſſions more violent and deſtructive. Her thoughts were reſtleſs, her mind wandered from the ſcene before her, and it required all her addreſs to preſerve an apparent eaſe. She ſaw, or fancied ſhe ſaw, an impaſſioned air in the count, when he addreſſed himſelf to Julia, that corroded her heart with jealous fury.

At twelve the gates of the caſtle were thrown open, and the company quitted it for the woods, which were ſplendidly illuminated. Arcades of light lined the long viſtas, which were terminated by pyramids of lamps that preſented to the eye one bright column of flame. At irregular diſtances buildings were erected, hung with variegated lamps diſpoſed in the gayeſt and moſt fantaſtic forms. Collations were ſpread under the trees; and muſic, touched by unſeen hands, breathed around. The muſicians were placed in the moſt obſcure

and

and embowered ſpots, ſo as to elude the eye and ſtrike the imagination. The ſcene appeared enchanted. Nothing met the eye but beauty and romantic ſplendor; the ear received no ſounds but thoſe of mirth and melody. The younger part of the company formed themſelves into groups, which at intervals glanced through the woods, and were again unſeen. Julia ſeemed the magic queen of the place. Her heart dilated with pleaſure, and diffuſed over her features an expreſſion of pure and complacent delight. A generous, frank, and exalted ſentiment ſparkled in her eyes, and animated her manner. Her boſom glowed with benevolent affections; and ſhe ſeemed anxious to impart to all around her, a happineſs as unmixed as that ſhe experienced. Wherever ſhe moved, admiration followed her ſteps. Ferdinand was as gay as the ſcene around him. Emilia was pleaſed; and the marquis ſeemed to have left his melan-

melancholy in the caſtle. The marchioneſs alone was wretched. She ſupped with a ſelect party, in a pavillion on the ſea ſhore, which was fitted up with peculiar elegance. It was hung with white ſilk, drawn up in feſtoons, and richly fringed with gold. The ſofas were of the ſame materials, and alternate wreaths of lamps and of roſes entwined the columns. A row of ſmall lamps placed about the cornice, formed an edge of light round the roof which, with the other numerous lights, was reflected in a blaze of ſplendor from the large mirrors that adorned the room. The count Muriani was of the party;—he complimented the marchioneſs on the beauty of her daughters; and after lamenting with gaiety the captives which their charms would enthral, he mentioned the count de Vereza. "He is certainly of all others the man moſt deſerving the lady Julia. As they danced, I thought they exhibited a perfect

ſect model of the beauty of either ſex; and if I miſtake not, they are inſpired with a mutual admiration." The marchioneſs, endeavouring to conceal her uneaſineſs, ſaid, " Yes, my lord, I allow the count all the merit you adjudge him, but from the little I have ſeen of his diſpoſition, he is too volatile for a ſerious attachment." At that inſtant the count entered the pavillion: " Ah, ſaid Muriani, laughingly, you was the ſubject of our converſation, and ſeem to be come in good time to receive the honours allotted you. I was interceding with the marchioneſs for her intereſt in your favour, with the lady Julia; but ſhe abſolutely refuſes it; and though ſhe allows you merit, alledges, that you are by nature fickle and inconſtant. What ſay you—would not the beauty of lady Julia bind your unſteady heart?"

" I know not how I have deſerved that character of the marchioneſs," ſaid he

the count with a ſmile, " but that heart muſt be either fickle or inſenſible in an uncommon degree, which can boaſt of freedom in the preſence of lady Julia." The marchioneſs, mortified by the whole converſation, now felt the full force of Vereza's reply, which ſhe imagined he pointed with particular emphaſis.

The entertainment concluded with a grand firework, which was exhibited on the margin of the ſea, and the company did not part till the dawn of morning. Julia retired from the ſcene with regret. She was enchanted with the new world that was now exhibited to her, and ſhe was not cool enough to diſtinguiſh the vivid glow of imagination from the colours of real bliſs. The pleaſure ſhe now felt, ſhe believed would always be renewed, and in an equal degree, by the objects which firſt excited it. The weakneſs of humanity is never willingly perceived by young minds. It is pain-

painful to know, that we are operated upon by objects whoſe impreſſions are variable as they are indefinable—and that what yeſterday affected us ſtrongly, is to-day but imperfectly felt, and to-morrow perhaps ſhall be diſregarded. When at length this unwelcome truth is received into the mind, we at firſt reject, with diſguſt, every appearance of good, we diſdain to partake of a happineſs which we cannot always command, and we not unfrequently ſink into a temporary deſpair. Wiſdom or accident, at length, recall us from our error, and offers to us ſome object capable of producing a pleaſing, yet laſting effect, which effect, therefore, we call happineſs. Happineſs has this eſſential difference from what is commonly called pleaſure, that virtue forms its baſis, and virtue being the offspring of reaſon, may be expected to produce uniformity of effect.

The paſſions which had hitherto lain con-

cealed in Julia's heart, touched by circumſtance, dilated to its power, and afforded her a ſlight experience of the pain and delight which flow from their influence. The beauty and accompliſhments of Vereza raiſed in her a new and various emotion, which reflection made her fear to encourage, but which was too pleaſing to be wholly reſiſted. Tremblingly alive to a ſenſe of delight, and unchilled by diſappointment, the young heart welcomes every feeling, not ſimply painful, with a romantic expectation, that it will expand into bliſs.

Julia ſought with eager anxiety to diſcover the ſentiments of Vereza towards her; ſhe revolved each circumſtance of the day, but they afforded her little ſatisfaction; they reflected only a glimmering and uncertain light, which inſtead of guiding, ſerved only to perplex her. Now ſhe remembered ſome inſtance of particular attention, and then

ſome

ſome mark of apparent indifference. She compared his conduct with that of the other young nobleſſe; and thought each appeared equally deſirous of the favour of every lady preſent. All the ladies, however, appeared to her to court the admiration of Vereza, and ſhe trembled leſt he ſhould be too ſenſible of the diſtinction. She drew from theſe reflections no poſitive inference; and though diſtruſt rendered pain the predominate ſenſation, it was ſo exquiſitely interwoven with delight, that ſhe could not wiſh it exchanged for her former eaſe. Thoughtful and reſtleſs, ſleep fled from her eyes, and ſhe longed with impatience for the morning, which ſhould again preſent Vereza, and enable her to purſue the enquiry. She roſe early, and adorned herſelf with unuſual care. In her favourite cloſet ſhe awaited the hour of breakfaſt, and endeavoured to read, but her thoughts wandered from the ſubject.

Her

Her lute and favourite airs loſt half their power to pleaſe; the day ſeemed to ſtand ſtill—ſhe became melancholy, and thought the breakfaſt hour would never arrive. At length the clock ſtruck the ſignal, the ſound vibrated on every nerve, and trembling ſhe quitted the cloſet for her ſiſter's apartment. Love taught her diſguiſe. Till then Emilia had ſhared all her thoughts; they now deſcended to the breakfaſt-room in ſilence, and Julia almoſt feared to meet her eye. In the breakfaſt-room they were alone. Julia found it impoſſible to ſupport a converſation with Emilia, whoſe obſervations interrupting the courſe of her thoughts, became unintereſting and tireſome. She was therefore about to retire to her cloſet, when the marquis entered. His air was haughty, and his look ſevere. He coldly ſaluted his daughters, and they had ſcarcely time to reply to his general enquiries, when the marchioneſs entered,

ed, and the company ſoon after aſſembled. Julia, who had awaited with ſo painful an impatience for the moment which ſhould preſent Vereza to her ſight, now ſighed that it was arrived. She ſcarcely dared to lift her timid eyes from the ground, and when by accident they met his, a ſoft tremour ſeized her; and apprehenſion leſt he ſhould diſcover her ſentiments, ſerved only to render her confuſion conſpicuous. At length a glance from the marchioneſs recalled her bewildered thoughts; and other fears ſuperceding thoſe of love, her mind, by degrees, recovered its dignity. She could diſtinguiſh in the behaviour of Vereza no ſymptoms of particular admiration, and ſhe reſolved to conduct herſelf towards him with the moſt ſcrupulous care.

This day, like the preceding one, was devoted to joy. In the evening there was a concert, which was chiefly performed by the nobility. Ferdinand play-

ed the violincello, Vereza the german flute, and Julia the piano forte, which ſhe touched with a delicacy and execution that engaged every auditor. The confuſion of Julia may be eaſily imagined, when Ferdinand, ſelecting a beautiful duet, deſired Vereza would accompany his ſiſter. The pride of conſcious excellence, however, quickly overcame her timidity, and enabled her to exert all her powers. The air was ſimple and pathetic, and ſhe gave it thoſe charms of expreſſion ſo peculiarly her own. She ſtruck the chords of her piano forte in beautiful accompaniment, and towards the cloſe of the ſecond ſtanza, her voice reſting on one note, ſwelled into a tone ſo exquiſite, and from thence deſcended to a few ſimple notes, which ſhe touched with ſuch impaſſioned tenderneſs that every eye wept to the ſounds. The breath of the flute trembled, and Hippolitus entranced, forgot to play. A pauſe of

ſilence

ſilence enſued at the concluſion of the piece, and continued till a general ſigh ſeemed to awaken the audience from their enchantment. Amid the general applauſe, Hippolitus was ſilent. Julia obſerved his behaviour, and gently raiſing her eyes to his, there read the ſentiments which ſhe had inſpired. An exquiſite emotion thrilled her heart, and ſhe experienced one of thoſe rare moments which illuminate life with a ray of bliſs, by which the darkness of its general ſhade is contraſted. Care, doubt, every diſagreeable ſenſation vaniſhed, and for the remainder of the evening ſhe was conſcious only of delight. A timid reſpect marked the manner of Hippolitus, more flattering to Julia than the moſt ardent profeſſions. The evening concluded with a ball, and Julia was again the partner of the count.

When the ball broke up, ſhe retired to her apartment, but not to ſleep. Joy is as reſtleſs as anxiety or ſorrow. She

ſeemed to have entered upon a new ſtate of exiſtence;—thoſe fine ſprings of affection which had hitherto lain concealed, were now touched, and yielded to her a happineſs more exalted than any her imagination had ever painted. She reflected on the tranquillity of her paſt life, and comparing it with the emotions of the preſent hour, exulted in the difference. All her former pleaſures now appeared inſipid; ſhe wondered that they ever had power to affect her, and that ſhe had endured with content the dull uniformity to which ſhe had been condemned. It was now only that ſhe appeared to live. Abſorbed in the ſingle idea of being beloved, her imagination ſoared into the regions of romantic bliſs, and bore her high above the poſſibility of evil. Since ſhe was beloved by Hippolitus, ſhe could only be happy.

From this ſtate of entranced delight, ſhe was awakened by the ſound of mu-

ſic

ſic immediately under her window. It was a lute touched by a maſterly hand. After a wild and melancholy ſymphony, a voice of more than magic expreſſion ſwelled into an air ſo pathetic and tender, that it ſeemed to breathe the very ſoul of love. The chords of the lute were ſtruck in low and ſweet accompaniment. Julia liſtened, and diſtinguiſhed the following words:

SONNET.

STILL is the night-breeze!—not a lonely ſound
Steals through the ſilence of this dreary hour;
O'er theſe high battlements Sleep reigns profound,
And ſheds on all, his ſweet oblivious power.

On all but me—I vainly aſk his dews
To ſteep in ſhort forgetfulneſs my cares.
Th' affrighted god ſtill flies when Love purſues,
Still—ſtill denies the wretched lover's prayers.

An interval of ſilence followed, and the air was repeated; after which the muſic was heard no more. If before Julia believed that ſhe was loved by

Hippolitus, ſhe was now confirmed in the ſweet reality. But ſleep at length fell upon her ſenſes, and the airy forms of ideal bliſs no longer fleeted before her imagination. Morning came, and ſhe aroſe light and refreſhed. How different were her preſent ſenſations from thoſe of the preceding day. Her anxiety had now evaporated in joy, and ſhe experienced that airy dance of ſpirits which accumulates delight from every object; and with a power like the touch of enchantment, can transform a gloomy deſert into a ſmiling Eden. She flew to the breakfaſt-room, ſcarcely conſcious of motion; but, as ſhe entered it, a ſoft confuſion overcame her; ſhe bluſhed, and almoſt feared to meet the eyes of Vereza. She was preſently relieved, however, for the count was not there. The company aſſembled—Julia watched the entrance of every perſon with painful anxiety, but he for whom ſhe looked did not appear. Surprized

prized and uneaſy, ſhe fixed her eyes on the door, and whenever it opened, her heart beat with an expectation which was as often checked by diſappointment. In ſpite of all her efforts, her vivacity ſunk into languor, and ſhe then perceived that love may produce other ſenſations than thoſe of delight. She found it poſſible to be unhappy, though loved by Hippolitus; and acknowledged with a ſigh of regret, which was yet new to her, how tremblingly her peace depended upon him. He neither appeared nor was mentioned at breakfaſt; but though delicacy prevented her enquiring after him, converſation ſoon became irkſome to her, and ſhe retired to the apartment of Madame de Menon. There ſhe employed herſelf in painting, and endeavoured to beguile the time till the hour of dinner, when ſhe hoped to ſee Hippolitus. Madame was, as uſual, friendly and cheerful, but ſhe perceived a reſerve

in the conduct of Julia, and penetrated without difficulty into its cauſe. She was, however, ignorant of the object of her pupil's admiration. The hour ſo eagerly deſired by Julia at length arrived, and with a palpitating heart ſhe entered the hall. The count was not there, and in the courſe of converſation, ſhe learned that he had that morning ſailed for Naples. The ſcene which ſo lately appeared enchanting to her eyes, now changed its hue; and in the midſt of ſociety, and ſurrounded by gaiety, ſhe was ſolitary and dejected. She accuſed herſelf of having ſuffered her wiſhes to mislead her judgment; and the preſent conduct of Hippolitus convinced her, that ſhe had miſtaken admiration, for a ſentiment more tender. She believed too, that the muſician who had addreſſed her in his ſonnet, was not the count; and thus at once was diſſolved all the ideal fabrick of her happineſs. How ſhort a period often reverſes the

character

character of our ſentiments, rendering that which yeſterday we deſpiſed, to day deſirable. The tranquil ſtate which ſhe had ſo lately delighted to quit, ſhe now reflected upon with regret. She had, however, the conſolation of believing that her ſentiments towards the count were unknown, and the ſweet conſciouſneſs that her conduct had been governed by a nice ſenſe of propriety.

The public rejoicings at the caſtle cloſed with the week; but the gay ſpirit of the marchioneſs forbade a return to tranquillity; and ſhe ſubſtituted diverſions more private, but in ſplendour ſcarcely inferior to the preceding ones. She had obſerved the behaviour of Hippolitus on the night of the concert with chagrin, and his departure with ſorrow; yet diſdaining to perpetuate misfortune by reflection, ſhe ſought to loſe the ſenſe of diſappointment in the hurry of diſſipation. But her efforts to eraſe him from her remembrance were ineffectual.

Unaccuſtomed to oppoſe the bent of her inclinations, they now maintained unbounded ſway; and ſhe found too late, that in order to have a due command of our paſſions, it is neceſſary to ſubject them to early obedience. Paſſion, in its undue influence, produces weakneſs as well as injuſtice. The pain which now recoiled upon her heart from diſappointment, ſhe had not ſtrength of mind to endure, and ſhe ſought relief from its preſſure in afflicting the innocent. Julia, whoſe beauty ſhe imagined had captivated the count, and confirmed him in indifference towards herſelf, ſhe inceſſantly tormented by the exerciſe of thoſe various and ſplenetic little arts, which elude the eye of the common obſerver, and are only to be known by thoſe who have felt them. Arts, which individually are inconſiderable, but in the aggregate, amount to a cruel and deciſive effect.

From Julia's mind the idea of happineſs

neſs was now faded. Pleaſure had withdrawn her beam from the proſpect, and the objects no longer illumined by her ray, became dark and colourleſs. As often as her ſituation would permit, ſhe withdrew from ſociety, and ſought the freedom of ſolitude, where ſhe could indulge in melancholy thoughts, and give a looſe to that deſpair which is ſo apt to follow the diſappointment of our firſt hopes.

Week after week elapſed, yet no mention was made of returning to Naples. The marquis at length declared it his intention to ſpend the remainder of the ſummer in the caſtle. To this determination the marchioneſs ſubmitted with decent reſignation, for ſhe was here ſurrounded by a croud of flatterers, and her invention ſupplied her with continual diverſions: that gaiety which rendered Naples ſo dear to her, glittered in the woods of Mazzini, and reſounded through the caſtle.

The apartments of Madame de Menon were ſpacious and noble. The windows opened upon the ſea, and commanded a view of the ſtraits of Meſſina, bounded on one ſide by the beautiful ſhores of the iſle of Sicily, and on the other by the high mountains of Calabria. The ſtraits, filled with veſſels whoſe gay ſtreamers glittered to the ſun beam, preſented to the eye an ever moving ſcene. The principal room opened upon a gallery that overhung the grand terrace of the caſtle, and it commanded a proſpect which for beauty and extent has ſeldom been equalled. Theſe were formerly conſidered the chief apartments of the caſtle; and when the Marquis quitted them for Naples, were allotted for the reſidence of Madame de Menon, and her young charge. The marchioneſs, ſtruck with the proſpect which the windows afforded, and with the pleaſantneſs of the gallery, determined to reſtore the rooms to their former

mer ſplendour. She ſignified this intention to Madame, for whom other apartments were provided. The chambers of Emilia and Julia forming part of the ſuite, they were alſo claimed by the marchioneſs, who left Julia only her favourite cloſet. The rooms to which they removed, were ſpacious, but gloomy; they had been for ſome years uninhabited; and though preparations had been made for the reception of their new inhabitants, an air of deſolation reigned within them that inſpired melancholy ſenſations. Julia obſerved that her chamber, which opened beyond Madame's, formed a part of the ſouthern building, with which, however, there appeared no means of communication. The late myſterious circumſtances relating to this part of the fabric, now aroſe to her imagination, and conjured up a terror which reaſon could not ſubdue. She told her emotions to Madame, who, with more prudence than ſincerity, laughed

laughed at her fears. The behaviour of the marquis, the dying words of Vincent, together with the preceding circumſtances of alarm, had ſunk deep in the mind of Madame, but ſhe ſaw the neceſſity of confining to her own breaſt, doubts which time only could reſolve.

Julia endeavoured to reconcile herſelf to the change, and a circumſtance ſoon occurred which obliterated her preſent ſenſations, and excited others far more intereſting. One day that ſhe was arranging ſome papers in the ſmall drawers of a cabinet that ſtood in her apartment, ſhe found a picture which fixed all her attention. It was a miniature of a lady, whoſe countenance was touched with ſorrow, and expreſſed an air of dignified reſignation. The mournful ſweetneſs of her eyes, raiſed towards Heaven with a look of ſupplication, and the melancholy languor that ſhaded her features, ſo deeply affected

fected Julia, that her eyes were filled with involuntary tears. She ſighed and wept, ſtill gazing on the picture, which ſeemed to engage her by a kind of faſcination. She almoſt fancied that the portrait breathed, and that the eyes were fixed on her's with a look of penetrating ſoftneſs. Full of the emotions which the miniature had excited, ſhe preſented it to Madame, whoſe mingled ſorrow and ſurprize increaſed her curioſity. But what were the various ſenſations which preſſed upon her heart, on learning that ſhe had wept over the reſemblance of her mother! Deprived of a mother's tenderneſs before ſhe was ſenſible of its value, it was now only that ſhe mourned the event which lamentation could not recall. Emilia, with an emotion as exquiſite, mingled her tears with thoſe of her ſiſter. With eager impatience they preſſed Madame to diſcloſe the cauſe of that ſorrow which ſo emphatically marked the features of their mother.

" Alas!

" Alas! my dear children," ſaid Madame, deeply ſighing,, " you engage me in a taſk too ſevere, not only for your peace, but for mine; ſince, in giving you the information you require, I muſt retrace ſcenes of my own life, which I wiſh for ever obliterated. It would, however, be both cruel and unjuſt to with-hold an explanation ſo nearly intereſting to you, and I will ſacrifice my own eaſe to your wiſhes.

" Louiſa de Bernini, your mother, was, as you well know, the only daughter of the count de Bernini. Of the misfortunes of your family, I believe you are yet ignorant. The chief eſtates of the count were ſituated in the *Val di Demona*, a valley deriving its name from its vicinity to Mount Ætna, which vulgar tradition has peopled with devils. In one of thoſe dreadful eruptions of Ætna, which deluged this valley with a flood of fire, a great part of your grandfather's domains in that quarter were

were laid waſte. The count was at that time with a part of his family at Meſſina, but the counteſs and her ſon, who were in the country, were deſtroyed. The remaining property of the count was proportionably inconſiderable, and the loſs of his wife and ſon deeply affected him. He retired with Louiſa, his only ſurviving child, who was then near fifteen, to a ſmall eſtate near Cattania. There was ſome degree of relationſhip between your grandfather and myſelf; and your mother was attached to me by the ties of ſentiment, which, as we grew up, united us ſtill more ſtrongly than thoſe of blood. Our pleaſures and our taſtes were the ſame; and a ſimilarity of misfortunes might, perhaps, contribute to cement our early friendſhip. I, like herſelf, had loſt a parent in the eruption of Ætna. My mother had died before I underſtood her value, but my father, whom I revered and tenderly loved, was deſtroyed by

by one of thoſe terrible events; his lands were buried beneath the lava, and he left an only ſon and myſelf to mourn his fate, and encounter the evils of poverty. The count, who was our neareſt ſurviving relation, generouſly took us home to his houſe, and declared that he conſidered us as his children. To amuſe his leiſure hours, he undertook to finiſh the education of my brother, who was then about ſeventen, and whoſe riſing genius promiſed to reward the labours of the count. Louiſa and myſelf often ſhared the inſtruction of her father, and at thoſe hours Orlando was generally of the party. The tranquil retirement of the count's ſituation, the rational employment of his time between his own ſtudies, the education of thoſe whom he called his children, and the converſation of a few ſelect friends, anticipated the effect of time, and ſoftened the aſperities of his diſtreſs into a tender complacent melancholy. As for Louiſa

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and myſelf, who were yet new in life, and whoſe ſpirits poſſeſſed the happy elaſticity of youth, our minds gradually ſhifted from ſuffering to tranquillity, and from tranquillity to happineſs. I have ſometimes thought that when my brother has been reading to her a delightful paſſage, the countenance of Louiſa diſcovered a tender intereſt, which ſeemed to be excited rather by the reader than by the author. Theſe days, which was ſurely the moſt enviable of our lives, now paſſed in ſerene enjoyments, and in continual gradations of improvement.

" The count deſigned my brother for the army, and the time now drew nigh when he was to join the Sicilian regiment, in which he had a commiſſion. The abſent thoughts, and dejected ſpirits of my couſin, now diſcovered to me the ſecret which had long been concealed even from herſelf; for it was not till Orlando was about to depart, that ſhe perceived how dear he was to her

her peace. On the eve of his departure, the count lamented with fatherly, yet manly tenderneſs, the diſtance which was ſoon to ſeparate us. "But we ſhall meet again," ſaid he, "when the honours of war ſhall have rewarded the bravery of my ſon. Louiſa grew pale, a half ſuppreſſed ſigh eſcaped her, and to conceal her emotion, ſhe turned to her harpſichord.

"My brother had a favourite dog, which, before he ſet off, he preſented to Julia, and committing it to her care, begged ſhe would be kind to it, and ſometimes remember its maſter. He checked his riſing emotion, but as he turned from her, I perceived the tear that wetted his cheek. He departed, and with him the ſpirit of our happineſs ſeemed to evaporate. The ſcenes which his preſence had formerly enlivened, were now forlorn and melancholy, yet we loved to wander in what were once his favourite haunts. Louiſa forbore

forbore to mention my brother even to me, but frequently when ſhe thought herſelf unobſerved, ſhe would ſteal to her harpſichord, and repeat the ſtrain which ſhe had played on the evening before his departure.

" We had the pleaſure to hear from time to time that he was well; and though his own modeſty threw a veil over his conduct, we could collect from other accounts that he had behaved with great bravery. At length the time of his return approached, and the enlivened ſpirits of Julia declared the influence he retained in her heart. He returned, bearing public teſtimony of his valour in the honours which had been conferred upon him. He was received with univerſal joy; the count welcomed him with the pride and fondneſs of a father, and the villa became again the ſeat of happineſs. His perſon and manners were much improved; the elegant beauty of the youth was

now

now exchanged for the graceful dignity of manhood, and ſome knowledge of the world was added to that of the ſciences. The joy which illumined his countenance when he met Julia, ſpoke at once his admiration and his love; and the bluſh which her obſervation of it brought upon her cheek, would have diſcovered even to an unintereſted ſpectator that this joy was mutual.

" Orlando brought with him a young Frenchman, a brother officer, who had reſcued him from imminent danger in battle, and whom he introduced to the count as his preſerver. The count received him with gratitude and diſtinction, and he was for a conſiderable time an inmate at the villa. His manners were ſingularly pleaſing, and his underſtanding was cultivated and refined. He ſoon diſcovered a partiality for me, and he was indeed too pleaſing to be ſeen with indifference. Gratitude for the

the valuable life he had preſerved, was perhaps the ground work of an eſteem which ſoon increaſed into the moſt affectionate love. Our attachment grew ſtronger as our acquaintance increaſed; and at length the chevalier de Menon aſked me of the count, who conſulted my heart, and finding it favourable to the connection, proceeded to make the neceſſary enquiries concerning the family of the ſtranger. He obtained a ſatisfactory and pleaſing account of it. The chevalier was the ſecond ſon of a French gentleman of large eſtates in France, who had been ſome years deceaſed. He had left ſeveral ſons; the family eſtate, of courſe, devolved to the eldeſt, but to the two younger he had bequeathed conſiderable property. Our marriage was ſolemnized in a private manner at the villa, in the preſence of the count, Louiſa, and my brother. Soon after the nuptials, my huſband and Orlando were remand-

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ed to their regiments. My brother's affections were now unalterably fixed upon Louiſa, but a ſentiment of delicacy and generoſity ſtill kept him ſilent. He thought, poor as he was, to ſolicit the hand of Louiſa, would be to repay the kindneſs of the count with ingratitude. I have ſeen the inward ſtruggles of his heart, and mine has bled for him. The count and Louiſa ſo earneſtly ſolicited me to remain at the villa during the campaign, that at length my huſband conſented. We parted—O! let me forget that period!—Had I accompanied him, all might have been well; and the long, long years of affliction which followed had been ſpared me."

The horn now ſounded the ſignal for dinner, and interrupted the narrative of Madame. Her beauteous auditors wiped the tears from their eyes, and with extreme reluctance deſcended to the hall. The day was occupied with company and diverſions, and it was

was not till late in the evening that they were ſuffered to retire. They haſtened to Madame immediately upon their being releaſed; and too much intereſted for ſleep, and too importunate to be repulſed, ſolicited the ſequel of her ſtory. She objected the lateneſs of the hour, but at length yielded to their entreaties. They drew their chairs cloſe to her's; and every ſenſe being abſorbed in the ſingle one of hearing, followed her through the courſe of her narrative.

" My brother again departed without diſcloſing his ſentiments; the effort it coſt him was evident, but his ſenſe of honour ſurmounted every oppoſing conſideration. Louiſa again drooped, and pined in ſilent ſorrow. I lamented equally for my friend and my brother; and have a thouſand times accuſed that delicacy as falſe, which with-held them from the happineſs they might ſo eaſily and ſo innocently have obtained. The

behaviour of the count, at leaſt to my eye, ſeemed to indicate the ſatisfaction which this union would have given him. It was about this period that the marquis Mazzini firſt ſaw and became enamoured of Louiſa. His propoſals were very flattering, but the count forbore to exert the undue authority of a father; and he ceaſed to preſs the connection, when he perceived that Louiſa was really averſe to it. Louiſa was ſenſible of the generoſity of his conduct, and ſhe could ſcarcely reject the alliance without a ſigh, which her gratitude paid to the kindneſs of her father.

" But an event now happened which diſſolved at once our happineſs, and all our air drawn ſchemes for futurity. A diſpute, which it ſeems originated in a trifle, but ſoon increaſed to a ſerious degree, aroſe between the *Chevalier de Menon* and my brother. It was decided by the ſword, and my dear brother fell by the hand of my huſband. I ſhall

paſs

paſs over this period of my life. It is too painful for recollection. The effect of this event upon Louiſa was ſuch as may be imagined. The world was now become indifferent to her, and as ſhe had no proſpect of happineſs for herſelf, ſhe was unwilling to with-hold it from the father who had deſerved ſo much of her. After ſome time, when the marquis renewed his addreſſes, ſhe gave him her hand. The characters of the marquis and his lady were in their nature too oppoſite to form a happy union. Of this Louiſa was very ſoon ſenſible; and though the mildneſs of her diſpoſition made her tamely ſubmit to the unfeeling authority of her huſband, his behaviour ſunk deep in her heart, and ſhe pined in ſecret. It was impoſſible for her to avoid oppoſing the character of the marquis to that of him upon whom her affections had been ſo fondly and ſo juſtly fixed. The compariſon increaſed her ſufferings, which

ſoon preyed upon her conſtitution, and very viſibly affected her health. Her ſituation deeply afflicted the count, and united with the infirmities of age to ſhorten his life.

" Upon his death, I bade adieu to my couſin, and quitted Sicily for Italy, where the Chevalier de Menon had for ſome time expected me. Our meeting was very affecting. My reſentment towards him was done away, when I obſerved his pale and altered countenance, and perceived the melancholy which preyed upon his heart. All the airy vivacity of his former manner was fled, and he was devoured by unavailing grief and remorſe. He deplored with unceaſing ſorrow the friend he had murdered, and my preſence ſeemed to open a freſh the wounds which time had begun to cloſe. His affliction, united with my own, was almoſt more than I could ſupport, but I was doomed to ſuffer, and endure yet more.

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In a ſubſequent engagement my huſband, weary of exiſtence, ruſhed into the heat of battle, and there obtained an honourable death. In a paper which he left behind him, he ſaid it was his intention to die in that battle; that he had long wiſhed for death, and waited for an opportunity of obtaining it without ſtaining his own character by the cowardice of ſuicide, or diſtreſſing me by an act of butchery. This event gave the finiſhing ſtroke to my afflictions;—yet let me retract:—another misfortune awaited me when I leaſt expected one. The *Chevalier de Menon* died without a will, and his brothers refuſed to give up his eſtate, unleſs I could produce a witneſs of my marriage. I returned to Sicily, and to my inexpreſſible ſorrow found that your mother had died during my ſtay abroad, a prey, I fear, to grief. The prieſt who performed the ceremony of my marriage, having been threatened with

puniſhment for ſome eccleſiaſtical offences, had ſecretly left the country; and thus was I deprived of thoſe proofs which were neceſſary to authenticate my claims to the eſtates of my huſband. His brothers, to whom I was an utter ſtranger, were either too prejudiced to believe, or believing, were too diſhonourable to acknowledge the juſtice of my claims. I was therefore at once abandoned to ſorrow and to poverty; a ſmall legacy from the count de Bernini being all that now remained to me."

"When the marquis married Maria de Vellorno, which was about this period, he deſigned to quit Mazzini for Naples. His ſon was to accompany him, but it was his intention to leave you, who were both very young, to the care of ſome perſon qualified to ſuperintend your education. My circumſtances rendered the office acceptable, and my former friendſhip for your mother

ther made the duty pleaſing to me. The marquis was, I believe, glad to be ſpared the trouble of ſearching further for what he had hitherto found it difficult to obtain—a perſon whom inclination as well as duty would bind to his intereſt."

Madame ceaſed to ſpeak, and Emilia and Julia wept to the memory of the mother, whoſe misfortunes this ſtory recorded. The ſufferings of Madame, together with her former friendſhip for the late marchioneſs, endeared her to her pupils, who from this period endeavoured by every kind and delicate attention to obliterate the traces of her ſorrows. Madame was ſenſible of this tenderneſs, and it was productive in ſome degree of the effect deſired. But a ſubject ſoon after occurred, which drew off their minds from the conſideration of their mother's fate to a ſubject more wonderful and equally intereſting.

One night that Emilia and Julia had been detained, by company, in ceremonial reſtraint, later than uſual, they were induced by the eaſy converſation of Madame, and by the pleaſure which a return to liberty naturally produces, to defer the hour of repoſe till the night was far advanced. They were engaged in intereſting diſcourſe, when Madame, who was then ſpeaking, was interrupted by a low hollow ſound, which aroſe from beneath the apartment, and ſeemed like the cloſing of a door. Chilled into a ſilence, they liſtened and diſtinctly heard it repeated. Deadly ideas crowded upon their imaginations, and inſpired a terror which ſcarcely allowed them to breathe. The noiſe laſted only for a moment, and a profound ſilence ſoon enſued. Their feelings at length relaxed, and ſuffered them to move to Emilia's apartment, when again they heard the ſame ſounds. Almoſt diſtracted with fear, they ruſhed into Madame's apartment,

ment, where Emilia ſunk upon the bed and fainted. It was a conſiderable time ere the efforts of Madame recalled her to ſenſation. When they were again tranquil, ſhe employed all her endeavours to compoſe the ſpirits of the young ladies, and diſſuade them from alarming the caſtle. Involved in dark and fearful doubts, ſhe yet commanded her feelings, and endeavoured to aſſume an appearance of compoſure. The late behaviour of the marquis had convinced her that he was nearly connected with the myſtery which hung over this part of the edifice; and ſhe dreaded to excite his reſentment by a further mention of alarms, which were perhaps only ideal, and whoſe reality ſhe had certainly no means of proving.

Influenced by theſe conſiderations, ſhe endeavoured to prevail on Emilia and Julia, to await in ſilence ſome confirmation of their ſurmiſes; but their terror made this a very difficult taſk.

They acquieſced, however, ſo far with her wiſhes, as to agree to conceal the preceding circumſtances from every perſon but their brother, without whoſe protecting preſence they declared it utterly impoſſible to paſs another night in the apartments. For the remainder of this night they reſolved to watch. To beguile the tediouſneſs of the time they endeavoured to converſe, but the minds of Emilia and Julia were too much affected by the late occurrence to wander from the ſubject. They compared this with the foregoing circumſtance of the figure and the light which had appeared; their imaginations kindled wild conjectures, and they ſubmitted their opinions to Madame, entreating her to inform them ſincerely, whether ſhe believed that diſembodied ſpirits were ever permitted to viſit this earth.

"My children," ſaid ſhe, "I will not attempt to perſuade you that the exiſtence

exiſtence of ſuch ſpirits is impoſſible. Who ſhall ſay that any thing is impoſſible to God? We know that he has made us, who are embodied ſpirits; he, therefore, can make unembodied ſpirits. If we cannot underſtand how ſuch ſpirits exiſt, we ſhould conſider the limited powers of our minds, and that we can not underſtand many things which are indiſputably true. No one yet knows why the magnetic needle points to the north; yet you, who have never ſeen a magnet, do not heſitate to believe that it has this tendency, becauſe you have been well aſſured of it, both from books and in converſation. Since, therefore, we are ſure that nothing is impoſſible to God, and that ſuch beings *may* exiſt, though we can not tell how, we ought to conſider by what evidence their exiſtence is ſupported. I do not ſay that ſpirits *have* appeared; but if ſeveral diſcreet unprejudiced perſons were to aſſure me that

they had ſeen one, I ſhould not be proud or bold enough to reply—" it is impoſſible." Let not, however, ſuch conſiderations diſturb your minds. I have ſaid thus much, becauſe I was unwilling to impoſe upon your underſtandings; it is now your part to exerciſe your reaſon, and preſerve the unmoved confidence of virtue. Such ſpirits, if indeed they have ever been ſeen, can have appeared only by the expreſs permiſſion of God, and for ſome very ſingular purpoſes; be aſſured that there are no beings who act unſeen by him; and that, therefore, there are none from whom innocence can ever ſuffer harm."

No further ſounds diſturbed them for that time; and before the morning dawned, wearineſs inſenſibly overcame apprehenſion, and ſunk them in repoſe.

When Ferdinand learned the circumſtances relative to the ſouthern ſide of the caſtle, his imagination ſeized with avidity each appearance of myſtery, and

and inſpired him with an irreſiſtible deſire to penetrate the ſecrets of this deſolate part of the fabrick. He very readily conſented to watch with his ſiſters in Julia's apartment; but as his chamber was in a remote part of the caſtle, there would be ſome difficulty in paſſing unobſerved to her's. It was agreed, however, that when all was huſhed, he ſhould make the attempt. Having thus reſolved, Emilia and Julia waited the return of night with reſtleſs and fearful impatience.

At length the family retired to reſt. The caſtle clock had ſtruck one, and Julia began to fear that Ferdinand had been diſcovered, when a knocking was heard at the door of the outer chamber.

Her heart beat with apprehenſions, which reaſon could not juſtify. Madame roſe, and enquiring who was there, was anſwered by the voice of Ferdinand. The door was chearfully opened. They drew their chairs round him, and endeavoured

deavoured to paſs the time in converſation; but fear and expectation attracted all their thoughts to one ſubject, and Madame alone preſerved her compoſure. The hour was now come when the ſounds had been heard the preceding night, and every ear was given to attention. All, however, remained quiet, and the night paſſed without any new alarm.

The greater part of ſeveral ſucceeding nights were ſpent in watching, but no ſounds diſturbed their ſilence. Ferdinand, in whoſe mind the late circumſtances had excited a degree of aſtoniſhment and curioſity ſuperior to common obſtacles, determined, if poſſible, to gain admittance to thoſe receſſes of the caſtle which had for ſo many years been hid from human eye. This, however, was a deſign which he ſaw little probability of accompliſhing, for the keys of that part of the edifice were in the poſſeſſion of the marquis, of whoſe late

late conduct he judged too well to believe he would ſuffer the apartments to be explored. He racked his invention for the means of getting acceſs to them, and at length recollecting that Julia's chamber formed a part of theſe buildings, it occurred to him, that according to the mode of building in old times, there might formerly have been a communication between them. This conſideration ſuggeſted to him the poſſibility of a concealed door in her apartment, and he determined to ſurvey it on the following night with great care.

CHAP.

## CHAPTER III.

THE caſtle was buried in ſleep when Ferdinand again joined his ſiſters in Madame's apartment. With anxious curioſity they followed him to the chamber. The room was hung with tapeſtry. Ferdinand carefully ſounded the wall which communicated with the ſouthern buildings. From one part of it a ſound was returned, which convinced him there was ſomething leſs ſolid than ſtone. He removed the tapeſtry, and behind it appeared, to his inexpreſſible ſatisfaction, a ſmall door. With a hand trembling through eagerneſs, he undrew the bolts, and was ruſhing forward, when he perceived that a lock with held his paſſage. The keys of Madame and his ſiſters were applied in vain, and he was compelled to ſubmit to diſappointment at the very moment when he congratulated himſelf

ſelf on ſucceſs, for he had with him no means of forcing the door.

He ſtood gazing on the door, and inwardly lamenting, when a low hollow ſound was heard from beneath. Emilia and Julia ſeized his arm; and almoſt ſinking with apprehenſion, liſtened in profound ſilence. A footſtep was diſtinctly heard, as if paſſing through the apartment below, after which all was ſtill. Ferdinand, fired by this confirmation of the late report, ruſhed on to the door, and again tried to burſt his way, but it reſiſted all the efforts of his ſtrength. The ladies now rejoiced in that circumſtance which they ſo lately lamented; for the ſounds had renewed their terror, and though the night paſſed without further diſturbance, their fears were very little abated.

Ferdinand, whoſe mind was wholly occupied with wonder, could with difficulty await the return of night. Emilia and Julia were ſcarcely leſs impatient.

ent. They counted the minutes as they paſſed; and when the family retired to reſt, haſtened with palpitating hearts to the apartment of Madame. They were ſoon after joined by Ferdinand, who brought with him tools for cutting away the lock of the door. They pauſed a few moments in the chamber in fearful ſilence, but no ſound diſturbed the ſtillneſs of night. Ferdinand applied a knife to the door, and in a ſhort time ſeparated the lock. The door yielded, and diſcloſed a large and gloomy gallery. He took a light. Emilia and Julia, fearful of remaining in the chamber, reſolved to accompany him, and each ſeizing an arm of Madame, they followed in ſilence. The gallery was in many parts falling to decay, the cieling was broke, and the window ſhutters ſhattered, which, together with the dampneſs of the walls, gave the place an air of wild deſolation.

They paſſed lightly on, for their ſteps ran

ran in whiſpering echoes through the gallery, and often did Julia caſt a fearful glance around.

The gallery terminated in a large old ſtair-caſe, which led to a hall below; on the left appeared ſeveral doors which ſeemed to lead to ſeparate apartments. While they heſitated which courſe to purſue, a light flaſhed faintly up the ſtair-caſe, and in a moment after paſſed away; at the ſame time was heard the ſound of a diſtant footſtep. Ferdinand drew his ſword and ſprang forward; his companions ſcreaming with terror, ran back to Madame's apartment.

Ferdinand deſcended a large vaulted hall; he croſſed it towards a low arched door which was left half open, and through which ſtreamed a ray of light. The door opened upon a narrow winding paſſage; he entered, and the light retiring, was quickly loſt in the windings of the place. Still he went on. The paſſage grew narrower, and the frequent frag-

fragments of looſe ſtone, made it now difficult to proceed. A low door cloſed the avenue, reſembling that by which he had entered. He opened it, and diſcovered a ſquare room, from whence roſe a winding ſtair-caſe, which led up the ſouth tower of the caſtle. Ferdinand pauſed to liſten; the ſound of ſteps was ceaſed, and all was profoundly ſilent. A door on the right attracted his notice; he tried to open it, but it was faſtened. He concluded, therefore, that the perſon, if indeed a human being it was that bore the light he had ſeen, had paſſed up the tower. After a momentary heſitation, he determined to aſcend the ſtair-caſe, but its ruinous condition made this an adventure of ſome difficulty. The ſteps were decayed and broken, and the looſeneſs of the ſtones rendered a footing very inſecure. Impelled by an irreſiſtible curioſity, he was undiſmayed, and began the aſcent. He had not proceeded very far, when the

ſtones

ſtones of a ſtep which his foot had juſt quitted, looſened by his weight, gave way; and dragging with them thoſe adjoining, formed a chaſm in the ſtaircaſe that terrified even Ferdinand, who was left tottering on the ſuſpended half of the ſteps, in momentary expectation of falling to the bottom with the ſtone on which he reſted. In the terror which this occaſioned, he attempted to ſave himſelf by catching at a kind of beam which projected over the ſtairs, when the lamp dropped from his hand, and he was left in total darkneſs. Terror now uſurped the place of every other intereſt, and he was utterly perplexed how to proceed. He feared to go on, leſt the ſteps above, as infirm as thoſe below, ſhould yield to his weight;—to return was impracticable, for the darkneſs precluded the poſſibility of diſcovering a means. He determined, therefore, to remain in this ſituation till light ſhould dawn through the narrow grates in the walls,

walls, and enable him to contrive ſome method of letting himſelf down to the ground.

He had remained here above an hour, when he ſuddenly heard a voice from below. It ſeemed to come from the paſſage leading to the tower, and perceptibly drew nearer. His agitation was now extreme, for he had no power of defending himſelf, and while he remained in the ſtate of torturing expectation, a blaze of light burſt upon the ſtair-caſe beneath him. In the ſucceeding moment he heard his own name ſounded from below. His apprehenſions inſtantly vaniſhed, for he diſtinguiſhed the voices of Madame and his ſiſters.

They had awaited his return in all the horrors of apprehenſion, till at length all fear for themſelves was loſt in their concern for him; and they, who ſo lately had not dared to enter this part of the edifice, now undauntedly ſearched it in queſt of Ferdinand. What

were

were their emotions when they diſcovered his perilous ſituation!

The light now enabled him to take a more accurate ſurvey of the place. He perceived that ſome few ſtones of the ſteps which had fallen, ſtill remained attached to the wall, but he feared to truſt to their ſupport only. He obſerved, however, that the wall itſelf was partly decayed, and conſequently rugged with the corners of half worn ſtones. On theſe ſmall projections he contrived, with the aſſiſtance of the ſteps already mentioned, to ſuſpend himſelf, and at length gained the unbroken part of the ſtairs in ſafety. It is difficult to determine which individual of the party rejoiced moſt at this eſcape. The morning now dawned, and Ferdinand deſiſted for the preſent from farther enquiry.

The intereſt which theſe myſterious circumſtances excited in the mind of Julia, had with-drawn her attention from a ſubject more dangerous to its peace. The image of Vereza, notwithſtanding,

ſtanding, would frequently intrude upon her fancy; and awakening the recollection of happy emotions, would call forth a ſigh which all her efforts could not ſuppreſs. She loved to indulge the melancholy of her heart in the ſolitude of the woods. One evening ſhe took her lute to a favourite ſpot on the ſea ſhore, and reſigning herſelf to a pleaſing ſadneſs, touched ſome ſweet and plaintive airs. The purple fluſh of evening was diffuſed over the heavens. The ſun, involved in clouds of ſplendid and innumerable hues, was ſetting o'er the diſtant waters, whoſe clear boſom glowed with rich reflection. The beauty of the ſcene, the ſoothing murmur of the high trees, waved by the light air which overſhadowed her, and the ſoft ſhelling of the waves that flowed gently in upon the ſhores, inſenſibly ſunk her mind into a ſtate of repoſe. She touched the chords of her lute in ſweet and wild melody, and ſung the following ode:

EVEN-

## EVENING.

EVENING veil'd in dewy ſhades,
Slowly ſinks upon the main;
See th' empurpled glory fades,
Beneath her ſober, chaſten'd reign.

Around her car the penſive Hours,
In ſweet illapſes meet the ſight,
Crown'd their brows with cloſing flow'rs
Rich with chryſtal dews of night.

Her hands, the duſky hues arrange
O'er the fine tints of parting day;
Inſenſibly the colours change,
And languiſh into ſoft decay.

Wide o'er the waves her ſhadowy veil ſhe draws,
As faint they die along the diſtant ſhores;
Through the ſtill air I mark each ſolemn pauſe,
Each riſing murmur which the wild wave pours.

A browner ſhadow ſpreads upon the air
And o'er the ſcene a penſive grandeur throws;
The rocks—the woods a wilder beauty wear,
And the deep wave in ſofter muſic flows.

And now the diſtant view where viſion fails
Twilight and grey obſcurity pervade;
Tint following tint each dark'ning object veils,
Till all the landſcape ſinks into the ſhade.

Oft from the airy ſteep of ſome lone hill,
While ſleeps the ſcene beneath the purple glow;
And evening lives o'er all ſerene and ſtill,
Wrapt let me view the magic world below!

And catch the dying gale that ſwells remote,
That ſteals the ſweetneſs from the ſhepherd's flute;
The diſtant torrent's melancholy note
And the ſoft warblings of the lover's lute.

Still through the deep'ning gloom of bow'ry ſhades
To Fancy's eye fantaſtic forms appear;
Low whiſp'ring echoes ſteal along the glades
And thrill the hear with wildly-pleaſing fear.

Parent of ſhades!—of ſilence!—dewy airs!
Of ſolemn muſing, and of viſion wild!
To thee my ſoul her penſive tribute bears,
And hails thy gradual ſtep, thy influence mild.

Having ceaſed to ſing, her fingers wandered over the lute in melancholy ſymphony, and for ſome moments ſhe remained loſt in the ſweet ſenſations which the muſic and the ſcenery had inſpired. She was awakened from her reverie, by a ſigh that ſtole from among the trees, and directing her eyes whence it came, beheld—Hippolitus! A thou-

ſand

and ſweet and mingled emotions preſſed upon her heart, yet ſhe ſcarcely dared to truſt the evidence of ſight. He advanced, and throwing himſelf at her feet. "Suffer me," ſaid he, in a tremulous voice, "to diſcloſe to you the ſentiments which you have inſpired, and to offer you the effuſions of a heart filled only with love and admiration." "Riſe, my lord," ſaid Julia, moving from her ſeat with an air of dignity, "that attitude is neither becoming you to uſe, or me to ſuffer. The evening is cloſing, and Ferdinand will be impatient to ſee you."

"Never will I riſe, Madam," replied the count, with an impaſſioned air, till—He was interrupted by the marchioneſs, who at this moment entered the grove. On obſerving the poſition of the count ſhe was retiring. "Stay Madam," ſaid Julia, almoſt ſinking under her confuſion. "By no



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means," replied the marchioneſs in a tone of irony, " my preſence would only interrupt a very agreeable ſcene. The count, I ſee, is willing to pay you his earlieſt reſpects." Saying this ſhe diſappeared, leaving Julia diſtreſſed and offended, and the count provoked at the intruſion. He attempted to renew the ſubject, but Julia haſtily followed the ſteps of the marchioneſs, and entered the caſtle.

The ſcene ſhe had witneſſed, raiſed in the marchioneſs a tumult of dreadful emotions. Love, hatred, and jealouſy, raged by turns in her heart, and defied all power of controul. Subjected to their alternate violence, ſhe experienced a miſery more acute than any ſhe had yet known. Her imagination, invigorated by oppoſition, heightened to her the graces of Hippolitus; her boſom glowed with more intenſe paſſion, and her brain was at length exaſperated almoſt to madneſs.

In

In Julia this ſudden and unexpected interview excited a mingled emotion of love and vexation, which did not ſoon ſubſide. At length, however, the delightful conſciouſneſs of Vereza's love bore her high above every other ſenſation; again the ſcene more brightly glowed, and again her fancy overcame the poſſibility of evil.

During the evening a tender and timid reſpect diſtinguiſhed the behaviour of the count towards Julia, who, contented with the certainty of being loved, reſolved to conceal her ſentiments till an explanation of his abrupt departure from Mazzini, and ſubſequent abſence, ſhould have diſſipated the ſhadow of myſtery which hung over this part of his conduct. She obſerved that the marchioneſs purſued her with ſteady and conſtant obſervation, and ſhe carefully avoided affording the count an opportunity of renewing the ſubject of the preceding interview, which when-

ever he approached her ſeemed to tremble on his lips.

Night returned, and Ferdinand repaired to the chamber of Julia to purſue his enquiry. Here he had not long remained, when the ſtrange and alarming ſounds which had been heard on the preceding night were repeated. The circumſtance that now ſunk in terror the minds of Emilia and Julia, fired with new wonder that of Ferdinand, who ſeizing a light, darted through the diſcovered door, and almoſt inſtantly diſappeared.

He deſcended into the ſame wild hall he had paſſed on the preceding night. He had ſcarcely reached the bottom of the ſtair-caſe, when a feeble light gleamed acroſs the hall, and his eye caught the glimpſe of a figure retiring through the low arched door which led to the ſouth tower. He drew his ſword and ruſhed on. A faint ſound died away along the paſſage, the windings of which

which prevented his ſeeing the figure he purſued. Of this, indeed, he had obtained ſo ſlight a view, that he ſcarcely knew whether it bore the impreſſion of a human form. The light quickly diſappeared, and he heard the door that opened upon the tower ſuddenly cloſe. He reached it, and forcing it open, ſprang forward; but the place was dark and ſolitary, and there was no appearance of any perſon having paſſed along it. He looked up the tower, and the chaſm which the ſtair-caſe exhibited, convinced him that no human being could have paſſed up. He ſtood ſilent and amazed; examining the place with an eye of ſtrict enquiry, he perceived a door, which was partly concealed by hanging ſtairs, and which till now had eſcaped his notice. Hope invigorated curioſity, but his expectation was quickly diſappointed, for this door alſo was faſtened. He tried in vain to force it. He knocked, and a

hollow ſullen ſound ran in echoes through the place, and died away at a diſtance. It was evident that beyond this door were chambers of conſiderable extent, but after long and various attempts to reach them, he was obliged to deſiſt, and he quitted the tower as ignorant and more diſſatisfied than he had entered it. He returned to the hall, which he now for the firſt time deliberately ſurveyed. It was a ſpacious and deſolate apartment, whoſe lofty roof roſe into arches ſupported by pillars of black marble. The ſame ſubſtance inlaid the floor, and formed the ſtair-caſe. The windows were high and gothic. An air of proud ſublimity, united with ſingular wildneſs, characterized the place, at the extremity of which aroſe ſeveral gothic arches, whoſe dark ſhade veiled in obſcurity the extent beyond. On the left hand appeared two doors, each of which was faſtened, and on the right the grand entrance

trance from the courts. Ferdinand determined to explore the dark receſs which terminated his view, and as he traverſed the hall, his imagination, affected by the ſurrounding ſcene, often multiplied the echoes of his footſteps into uncertain ſounds of ſtrange and fearful import.

He reached the arches, and diſcovered beyond a kind of inner hall of conſiderable extent, which was cloſed at the farther end by a pair of maſſy folding doors, heavily ornamented with carving. They were faſtened by a lock, and defied his utmoſt ſtrength.

As he ſurveyed the place in ſilent wonder, a ſullen groan aroſe from beneath the ſpot where he ſtood. His blood ran cold at the ſound, but ſilence returning, and continuing unbroken, he attributed his alarm to the illuſion of a fancy, which terror had impregnated. He made another effort to force the door, when a groan was repeated more

hollow, and more dreadful than the firſt. At this moment all his courage forſook him; he quitted the door, and haſtened to the ſtair-caſe, which he aſcended almoſt breathleſs with terror.

He found Madame de Menon and his ſiſters awaiting his return in the moſt painful anxiety; and, thus diſappointed in all his endeavours to penetrate the ſecret of theſe buildings, and fatigued with fruitleſs ſearch, he reſolved to ſuſpend farther enquiry.

When he related the circumſtances of his late adventure, the terror of Emilia and Julia was heightened to a degree that overcame every prudent conſideration. Their apprehenſion of the marquis's diſpleaſure, was loſt in a ſtronger feeling, and they reſolved no longer to remain in apartments which offered only terrific images to their fancy. Madame de Menon almoſt equally alarmed, and more perplexed, by this combination of ſtrange and unaccountable cir-

circumſtances, ceaſed to oppoſe their deſign. It was reſolved, therefore, that on the following day, Madame ſhould acquaint the marchioneſs with ſuch particulars of the late occurrences as their purpoſe made it neceſſary ſhe ſhould know, concealing their knowledge of the hidden door, and the incidents immediately dependant on it; and that Madame ſhould entreat a change of apartments.

Madame accordingly waited on the marchioneſs. The marchioneſs having liſtened to the account at firſt with ſurprize, and afterwards with indifference, condeſcended to reprove Madame for encouraging ſuperſtitious belief in the minds of her young charge. She concluded with ridiculing as fanciful the circumſtances related, and with refuſing, on account of the numerous viſitants at the caſtle, the requeſt preferred to her.

It is true the caſtle was crouded with

viſitors; the former apartments of Madame de Menon were the only ones unoccupied, and theſe were in magnificent preparation for the pleaſure of the marchioneſs, who was unaccuſtomed to ſacrifice her own wiſhes to the comfort of thoſe around her. She therefore treated lightly the ſubject, which, ſeriouſly attended to, would have endangered her new plan of delight.

But Emilia and Julia were too ſeriouſly terrified to obey the ſcruples of delicacy, or to be eaſily repulſed. They prevailed on Ferdinand to repreſent their ſituation to the marquis.

Meanwhile Hippolitus, who had paſſed the night in a ſtate of ſleepleſs anxiety, watched with buſy impatience, an opportunity of more fully diſcloſing to Julia, the paſſion which glowed in his heart. The firſt moment in which he beheld her, had awakened in him an admiration which had ſince ripened into a ſentiment more tender. He had

been

been prevented formally declaring his paſſion by the circumſtance which ſo ſuddenly called him to Naples. This was the dangerous illneſs of the marquis de Lomelli, his near and much-valued relation. But it was a taſk too painful to depart in ſilence, and he contrived to inform Julia of his ſentiments in the air which ſhe heard ſo ſweetly ſung beneath her window.

When Hippolitus reached Naples, the marquis was yet living, but expired a few days after his arrival, leaving the count heir to the ſmall poſſeſſions which remained from the extravagance of their anceſtors.

The buſineſs of adjuſting his rights had till now detained him from Sicily, whither he came for the ſole purpoſe of declaring his love. Here unexpected obſtacles awaited him. The jealous vigilance of the marchioneſs, conſpired with the delicacy of Julia, to with-hold from him the opportunity he ſo anxiouſly ſought.

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The buſineſs of adjuſting his rights had till now detained him from Sicily, whither he came for the ſole purpoſe of declaring his love. Here unexpected obſtacles awaited him. The jealous vigilance of the marchioneſs, conſpired with the delicacy of Julia, to with-hold from him the opportunity he ſo anxiouſly ſought.

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But Emilia and Julia were too ſeriouſly terrified to obey the ſcruples of delicacy, or to be eaſily repulſed. They prevailed on Ferdinand to repreſent their ſituation to the marquis.

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When Ferdinand entered upon the ſubject of the ſouthern buildings to the marquis, he carefully avoided mentioning the hidden door. The marquis liſtened for ſome time to the relation in gloomy ſilence, but at length aſſuming an air of diſpleaſure, reprehended Ferdinand for yielding his confidence to thoſe idle alarms, which he ſaid were the ſuggeſtions of a timid imagination. "Alarms," continued he, "which will readily find admittance to the weak mind of a woman, but which the firmer nature of man ſhould diſdain. Degenerate boy! Is it thus you reward my care? Do I live to ſee my ſon the ſport of every idle tale a woman may repeat? Learn to truſt reaſon and your ſenſes, and you will then be worthy of my attention."

The marquis was retiring, and Ferdinand now perceived it neceſſary to declare, that he had himſelf witneſſed the ſounds he mentioned. "Pardon me, my

my lord," ſaid he, " in the late inſtance I have been juſt to your command— my ſenſes have been the only evidences I have truſted. I have heard thoſe ſounds which I can not doubt." The marquis appeared ſhocked. Ferdinand perceived the change, and urged the ſubject ſo vigorouſly, that the marquis ſuddenly aſſuming a look of grave importance, commanded him to attend him in the evening in his cloſet.

Ferdinand in paſſing from the marquis met Hippolitus. He was pacing the gallery in much ſeeming agitation, but obſerving Ferdinand, he advanced to him. " I am ill at heart," ſaid he, in a melancholy tone, " aſſiſt me with your advice. We will ſtep into this apartment, where we can converſe without interruption."

" You are not ignorant," ſaid he, throwing himſelf into a chair, " of the tender ſentiments which your ſiſter Julia has inſpired. I entreat you by that

that ſacred friendſhip which has ſo long united us, to afford me an opportunity of pleading my paſſion. Her heart, which is ſo ſuſceptible of other impreſſions, is, I fear, inſenſible to love. Procure me, however, the ſatisfaction of certainty upon a point where the tortures of ſuſpence are ſurely the moſt intolerable."

"Your penetration," replied Ferdinand, "has for once forſaken you, elſe you would now be ſpared the tortures of which you complain, for you would have diſcovered what I have long obſerved, that Julia regards you with a partial eye."

"Do not," ſaid Hippolitus, "make diſappointment more terrible by flattery; neither ſuffer the partiality of friendſhip to miſlead your judgment. Your perceptions are affected by the warmth of your feelings, and becauſe you think I deſerve her diſtinction, you believe I poſſeſs it. Alas! you deceive yourſelf, but not me!"

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" The very reverſe," replied Ferdinand; " tis you who deceive yourſelf, or rather it is the delicacy of the paſſion which animates you, and which will ever operate againſt your clear perception of a truth in which your happineſs is ſo deeply involved. Believe me, I ſpeak not without reaſon:—ſhe loves you."

At theſe words Hippolitus ſtarted from his ſeat, and claſping his hands in fervent joy, " Enchanting ſounds!" cried he, in a voice tenderly impaſſioned; " *could* I but believe ye!—could I *but* believe ye—this world were paradiſe!"

During this exclamation, the emotions of Julia, who ſat in her cloſet adjoining, can with difficulty be imagined. A door which opened into it from the apartment where this converſation was held, was only half cloſed. Agitated with the pleaſure this declaration excited, ſhe yet trembled with apprehenſion

henſion leſt ſhe ſhould be diſcovered. She hardly dared to breathe, much leſs to move acroſs the cloſet to the door, which opened upon the gallery, whence ſhe might probably have eſcaped unnoticed, leſt the ſound of her ſtep ſhould betray her. Compelled, therefore, to remain where ſhe was, ſhe ſat in a ſtate of fearful diſtreſs, which no colour of language can paint.

"Alas!" reſumed Hippolitus, "I too eagerly admit the poſſibility of what I wiſh. If you mean that I ſhould really believe you, confirm your aſſertion by ſome proof." "Readily," rejoined Ferdinand.

The heart of Julia beat quick.

"When you was ſo ſuddenly called to Naples upon the illneſs of the marquis Lomelli, I marked her conduct well, and in that read the ſentiments of her heart. On the following morning, I obſerved in her countenance a reſtleſs anxiety which I had never ſeen before.

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She watched the entrance of every perſon with an eager expectation, which was as often ſucceeded by evident diſappointment. At dinner your departure was mentioned :—ſhe ſpilt the wine ſhe was carrying to her lips, and for the remainder of the day was ſpiritleſs and melancholy. I ſaw her ineffectual ſtruggles to conceal the oppreſſion at her heart. Since that time ſhe has ſeized every opportunity of withdrawing from company. The gaiety with which ſhe was ſo lately charmed—charmed her no longer; ſhe became penſive, retired, and I have often heard her ſinging in ſome lonely ſpot, the moſt moving and tender airs. Your return produced a viſible and inſtantaneous alteration; ſhe has now reſumed her gaiety; and the ſoft confuſion of her countenance, whenever you approach, might alone ſuffice to convince you of the truth of my aſſertion."

"O! talk for ever thus!" ſighed Hippolitus.

politus. " Theſe words are ſo ſweet, ſo ſoothing to my ſoul, that I could liſten till I forgot I had a wiſh beyond them. Yes!—Ferdinand, theſe circumſtances are not to be doubted, and conviction opens upon my mind a flow of extacy I never knew till now. O! lead me to her, that I may ſpeak the ſentiments which ſwell my heart."

They aroſe, when Julia, who with difficulty had ſupported herſelf, now impelled by an irreſiſtible fear of inſtant diſcovery, roſe alſo, and moved ſoftly towards the gallery. The ſound of her ſtep alarmed the count, who, apprehenſive leſt his converſation had been overheard, was anxious to be ſatisfied whether any perſon was in the cloſet. He ruſhed in, and diſcovered Julia! She caught at a chair to ſupport her trembling frame; and overwhelmed with mortifying ſenſations, ſunk into it, and hid her face in her robe. Hippolitus threw himſelf at her feet, and ſeizing

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her hand, preſſed it to his lips in expreſſive ſilence. Some moments paſſed before the confuſion of either would ſuffer them to ſpeak. At length recovering his voice, "Can you, Madam, ſaid he, forgive this intruſion, ſo unintentional? or will it deprive me of that eſteem which I have but lately ventured to believe I poſſeſſed, and which I value more than exiſtence itſelf. O! ſpeak my pardon! Let me not believe that a ſingle accident has deſtroyed my peace for ever."—"If your peace, Sir, depends upon a knowledge of my eſteem," ſaid Julia, in a tremulous voice, "that peace is already ſecure. If I wiſhed even to deny the partiality I feel, it would now be uſeleſs; and ſince I no longer wiſh this, it would alſo be painful." Hippolitus could only weep his thanks over the hand he ſtill held. "Be ſenſible, however, of the delicacy of my ſituation," continued ſhe, riſing, "and ſuffer me to withdraw." Saying this

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ſhe quitted the cloſet, leaving Hippolitus overcome with this ſweet confirmation of his wiſhes, and Ferdinand not yet recovered from the painful ſurprize which the diſcovery of Julia had excited. He was deeply ſenſible of the confuſion he had occaſioned her, and knew that apologies would not reſtore the compoſure he had ſo cruelly yet unwarily diſturbed.

Ferdinand awaited the hour appointed by the marquis in impatient curioſity. The ſolemn air which the marquis aſſumed when he commanded him to attend, had deeply impreſſed his mind. As the time drew nigh, expectation increaſed, and every moment ſeemed to linger into hours. At length he repaired to the cloſet, where he did not remain long before the marquis entered. The ſame chilling ſolemnity marked his manner. He locked the door of the cloſet, and ſeating himſelf, addreſſed Ferdinand as follows :

" I am

" I am now going to repoſe in you a confidence, which will ſeverely prove the ſtrength of your honour. But before I diſcloſe a ſecret, hitherto ſo carefully concealed, and now reluctantly told, you muſt ſwear to preſerve on this ſubject an eternal ſilence. If you doubt the ſteadineſs of your diſcretion—now declare it, and ſave yourſelf from the infamy, and the fatal conſequences, which may attend a breach of your oath; —if, on the contrary, you believe yourſelf capable of a ſtrict integrity—now accept the terms, and receive the ſecret I offer." Ferdinand was awed by this exordium—the impatience of curioſity was for a while ſuſpended, and he heſitated whether he ſhould receive the ſecret upon ſuch terms. At length he ſignified his conſent, and the marquis ariſing, drew his ſword from the ſcabbard.—" Here," ſaid he, offering it to Ferdinand, " ſeal your vows—ſwear by this ſacred pledge of honour never to

repeat

peat what I ſhall now reveal." Ferdinand bowed upon the ſword, and raiſing his eyes to heaven, ſolemnly ſwore. The marquis then reſumed his ſeat, and proceeded.

" You are not to learn that, about a century ago, this caſtle was in the poſſeſſion of Vincent, third marquis of Mazzini, my grandfather. At that time there exiſted an inveterate hatred between our family and that of della Campo. I ſhall not now revert to the origin of the animoſity, or relate the particulars of the conſequent feuds—ſuffice it to obſerve, that by the power of our family, the della Campos were unable to preſerve their former conſequence in Sicily, and they have therefore quitted it for a foreign land to live in unmoleſted ſecurity. To return to my ſubject.—My grandfather, believing his life endangered by his enemy, planted ſpies upon him. He employed ſome of the numerous banditti who

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ſought protection in his ſervice, and after ſome weeks paſt in waiting for an opportunity, they ſeized Henry della Campo, and brought him ſecretly to this caſtle. He was for ſome time confined in a cloſe chamber of the ſouthern buildings, where he expired; by what means I ſhall forbear to mention. The plan had been ſo well conducted, and the ſecrecy ſo ſtrictly preſerved, that every endeavour of his family to trace the means of his diſappearance, proved ineffectual. Their conjectures, if they fell upon our family, were ſupported by no proof; and the della Campo's are to this day ignorant of the mode of his death. A rumour had prevailed long before the death of my father, that the ſouthern buildings of the caſtle were haunted. I diſbelieved the fact, and treated it accordingly. One night when every human being of the caſtle, except myſelf, was retired to reſt, I had ſuch ſtrong and dreadful proofs of the general aſ-

ſertion, that even at this moment I can not recollect them without horror. Let me, if poſſible, forget them. From that moment I forſook thoſe buildings; they have ever ſince been ſhut up, and the circumſtance I have mentioned, is the true reaſon why I have reſided ſo little at the caſtle."

Ferdinand liſtened to this narrative in ſilent horror. He remembered the temerity with which he had dared to penetrate thoſe apartments—the light, and figure he had ſeen—and, above all, his ſituation in the ſtair-caſe of the tower. Every nerve thrilled at the recollection; and the terrors of remembrance almoſt equalled thoſe of reality.

The marquis permitted his daughters to change their apartments, but he commanded Ferdinand to tell them, that in granting their requeſt, he conſulted their eaſe only, and was himſelf by no means convinced of its propriety. They were accordingly re-inſtated in their former

former chambers, and the great room only of Madame's apartments was reſerved for the marchioneſs, who expreſſed her diſcontent to the marquis in terms of mingled cenſure and lamentation. The marquis privately reproved his daughters, for what he termed the idle fancies of a weak mind; and deſired them no more to diſturb the peace of the caſtle with the ſubject of their late fears. They received this reproof with ſilent ſubmiſſion—too much pleaſed with the ſucceſs of their ſuit to be ſuſceptible of any emotion but joy.

Ferdinand, reflecting on the late diſcovery, was ſhocked to learn, what was now forced upon his belief, that he was the deſcendant of a murderer. He now knew that innocent blood had been ſhed in the caſtle, and that the walls were ſtill the haunt of an unquiet ſpirit, which ſeemed to call aloud for retribution on the poſterity of him who had diſturbed its eternal reſt. Hippolitus

perceived his dejection, and entreated that he might participate his uneaſineſs; but Ferdinand, who had hitherto been frank and ingenuous, was now inflexibly reſerved. "Forbear," ſaid he, "to urge a diſcovery of what I am not permitted to reveal; this is the only point upon which I conjure you to be ſilent, and this, even to you, I can not explain." Hippolitus was ſurprized, but preſſed the ſubject no farther.

Julia, though ſhe had been extremely mortified by the circumſtances attendant on the diſcovery of her ſentiments to Hippolitus, experienced, after the firſt ſhock had ſubſided, an emotion more pleaſing than painful. The late converſation had painted in ſtrong colours the attachment of her lover. His diffidence—his ſlowneſs to perceive the effect of his merit—his ſucceeding rapture, when conviction was at length forced upon his mind; and his conduct upon diſcovering Julia, proved to her

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at once the delicacy and the ſtrength of his paſſion, and ſhe yielded her heart to ſenſations of pure and unmixed delight. She was rouſed from this ſtate of viſionary happineſs, by a ſummons from the marquis to attend him in the library. A circumſtance ſo unuſual ſurprized her, and ſhe obeyed with trembling curioſity. She found him pacing the room in deep thought, and ſhe had ſhut the door before he perceived her. The authoritative ſeverity in his countenance alarmed her, and prepared her for a ſubject of importance. He ſeated himſelf by her, and continued a moment ſilent. At length, ſteadily obſerving her, "I ſent for you, my child," ſaid he, "to declare the honour which awaits you. The duke de Luovo has ſolicited your hand. An alliance ſo ſplendid was beyond my expectation. You will receive the diſtinction with the gratitude it claims, and prepare for the celebration of the nuptials."

This ſpeech fell like the dart of death upon the heart of Julia. She ſat motionleſs—ſtupified and deprived of the power of utterance. The marquis obſerved her conſternation; and miſtaking its cauſe, " I acknowledge," ſaid he, " that there is ſomewhat abrupt in this affair; but the joy occaſioned by a diſtinction ſo unmerited on your part, ought to overcome the little feminine weakneſs you might otherwiſe indulge. Retire and compoſe yourſelf; and obſerve," continued he, in a ſtern voice, " this is no time for fineſſe." Theſe words rouſed Julia from her ſtate of horrid ſtupefaction. " O! Sir," ſaid ſhe, throwing herſelf at his feet, " forbear to enforce authority upon a point where to obey you would be worſe than death; if, indeed, to obey you were poſſible.—" Ceaſe," ſaid the marquis, " this affectation, and practiſe what becomes you." " Pardon me, my lord," ſhe replied, " my diſtreſs is, alas! unfeigned.

feigned. I cannot love the duke." "Away!" interrupted the marquis, "nor tempt my rage with objections thus childiſh and abſurd." "Yet hear me, my lord," ſaid Julia, tears ſwelling in her eyes, "and pity the ſufferings of a child, who never till this moment has dared to diſpute your commands."

"Nor ſhall ſhe now," ſaid the marquis. "What—when wealth, honour, and diſtinction, are laid at my feet, ſhall they be refuſed, becauſe a fooliſh girl—a very baby, who knows not good from evil, cries, and ſays ſhe cannot love! Let me not think of it—My juſt anger may, perhaps, out-run diſcretion, and tempt me to chaſtiſe your folly.—Attend to what I ſay—accept the duke, or quit this caſtle for ever, and wander where you will." Saying this, he burſt away, and Julia, who had hung weeping upon his knees, fell proſtrate upon the floor. The violence of the fall completed the effect of her diſtreſs, and

ſhe fainted. In this ſtate ſhe remained a conſiderable time. When ſhe recovered her ſenſes, the recollection of her calamity burſt upon her mind with a force that almoſt again overwhelmed her. She at length raiſed herſelf from the ground, and moved towards her own apartment, but had ſcarcely reached the great gallery, when Hippolitus entered it. Her trembling limbs would no longer ſupport her; ſhe caught at a banniſter to ſave herſelf; and Hippolitus, with all his ſpeed, was ſcarcely in time to prevent her falling. The pale diſtreſs exhibited in her countenance terrified him, and he anxiouſly enquired concerning it. She could anſwer him only with her tears, which ſhe found it impoſſible to ſuppreſs; and gently diſengaging herſelf, tottered to her cloſet. Hippolitus followed her to the door, but deſiſted from further importunity. He preſſed her hand to his lips in tender ſilence, and withdrew ſurprized and alarmed.

Julia,

Julia, reſigning herſelf to deſpair, indulged in ſolitude the exceſs of her grief. A calamity, ſo dreadful as the preſent, had never before preſented itſelf to her imagination. The union propoſed would have been hateful to her, even if ſhe had no prior attachment; what then muſt have been her diſtreſs, when ſhe had given her heart to him who deſerved all her admiration, and returned all her affection.

The duke de Luovo was of a character very ſimilar to that of the marquis. The love of power was his ruling paſſion;—with him no gentle or generous ſentiment meliorated the harſhneſs of authority, or directed it to acts of beneficence. He delighted in ſimple undiſguiſed tyranny. He had been twice married, and the unfortunate women ſubjected to his power, had fallen victims to the ſlow but corroding hand of ſorrow. He had one ſon, who ſome years before had eſcaped the tyranny of

his father, and had not been ſince heard of. At the late feſtival the duke had ſeen Julia; and her beauty made ſo ſtrong an impreſſion upon him, that he had been induced now to ſolicit her hand. The marquis, delighted with the proſpect of a connection ſo flattering to his favourite paſſion, readily granted his conſent, and immediately ſealed it with a promiſe.

Julia remained for the reſt of the day ſhut up in her cloſet, where the tender efforts of Madame and Emilia were exerted to ſoften her diſtreſs. Towards the cloſe of evening Ferdinand entered. Hippolitus, ſhocked at her abſence, had requeſted him to viſit her, to alleviate her affliction, and if poſſible to diſcover its cauſe. Ferdinand, who tenderly loved his ſiſter, was alarmed by the words of Hippolitus, and immediately ſought her. Her eyes were ſwelled with weeping, and her countenance was but too expreſſive of the ſtate of her mind. Ferdinand's diſ-

treſs,

treſs, when told of his father's conduct, was ſcarcely leſs than her own. He had pleaſed himſelf with the hope of uniting the ſiſter of his heart, with the friend whom he loved. An act of cruel authority now diſſolved the fairy dream of happineſs which his fancy had formed, and deſtroyed the peace of thoſe moſt dear to him. He ſat for a long time ſilent and dejected; at length, ſtarting from his melancholy reverie, he bad Julia good night, and returned to Hippolitus, who was waiting for him with anxious impatience in the north hall.

Ferdinand dreaded the effect of that deſpair, which the intelligence he had to communicate would produce in the mind of Hippolitus. He revolved ſome means of ſoftening the dreadful truth; but Hippolitus, quick to apprehend the evil which love taught him to fear, ſeized at once upon the reality. "Tell me all," ſaid he, in a tone of aſſumed

firmneſs. " " I am prepared for the worſt." Ferdinand related the decree of the marquis, and Hippolitus, ſoon ſunk into an exceſs of grief which defied, as much as it required, the powers of alleviation.

Julia, at length, retired to her chamber, but the ſorrow which occupied her mind, with-held the bleſſings of ſleep. Diſtracted and reſtleſs ſhe aroſe, and gently opened the window of her apartment. The night was ſtill, and not a breath diſturbed the ſurface of the waters. The moon ſhed a mild radiance over the waves, which in gentle undulations flowed upon the ſands. The ſcene inſenſibly tranquillized her ſpirits. A tender and pleaſing melancholy diffuſed itſelf over her mind; and as ſhe muſed, ſhe heard the daſhing of diſtant oars. Preſently ſhe perceived upon the light ſurface of the ſea a ſmall boat. The ſound of the oars ceaſed, and a ſolemn ſtrain of harmony (ſuch

as

as fancy wafts from the abodes of the bleſſed) ſtole upon the ſilence of night. A chorus of voices now ſwelled upon the air, and died away at diſtance. In the ſtrain Julia recollected the midnight hymn to the virgin, and holy enthuſiaſm filled her heart. The chorus was repeated, accompanied by a ſolemn ſtriking of oars. A ſigh of extacy ſtole from her boſom. Silence returned. The divine melody ſhe had heard calmed the tumult of her mind, and ſhe ſunk in ſweet repoſe.

She aroſe in the morning refreſhed by light ſlumbers; but the recollection of her ſorrows ſoon returned with new force, and ſickening faintneſs overcame her. In this ſituation ſhe received a meſſage from the marquis to attend him inſtantly. She obeyed, and he bade her prepare to receive the duke, who that morning purpoſed to viſit the caſtle. He commanded her to attire herſelf richly, and to welcome him with

ſmiles;

ſmiles. Julia ſubmitted in ſilence. She ſaw the marquis was inflexibly reſolved, and ſhe withdrew to indulge the anguiſh of her heart, and prepare for this deteſted interview.

The clock had ſtruck twelve, when a flouriſh of trumpets announced the approach of the duke. The heart of Julia ſunk at the ſound, and ſhe threw herſelf on a ſopha overwhelmed with bitter ſenſations. Here ſhe was ſoon diſturbed by a meſſage from the marquis. She aroſe, and tenderly embracing Emilia, their tears for ſome moments flowed together. At length ſummoning all her fortitude, ſhe deſcended to the hall, where ſhe was met by the marquis. He led her to the ſaloon in which the duke ſat, with whom having converſed a ſhort time, he withdrew. The emotion of Julia at this inſtant was beyond any thing ſhe had before ſuffered; but by a ſudden and ſtrange exertion of fortitude, which the force of deſperate calamity

ſome-

ſometimes affords us, but which inferior ſorrow toils after in vain, ſhe recovered her compoſure, and reſumed her natural dignity. For a moment ſhe wondered at herſelf, and ſhe formed the dangerous reſolution of throwing herſelf upon the generoſity of the duke, by acknowledging her reluctance to the engagement, and ſoliciting him to withdraw his ſuit.

The duke approached her with an air of proud condeſcenſion; and taking her hand, placed himſelf beſide her. Having paid ſome formal and general compliments to her beauty, he proceeded to profeſs himſelf her admirer. She liſtened for ſome time to his profeſſions, and when he appeared willing to hear her, ſhe addreſſed him—"I am juſtly ſenſible, my lord, of the diſtinction you offer me, and muſt lament that reſpectful gratitude is the only ſentiment I can return. Nothing can more ſtrongly prove my confidence in your generoſity, than

than when I confeſs to you, that parental authority urges me to give my hand, whither my heart cannot accompany it."

She pauſed—the duke continued ſilent.—" 'Tis you only, my lord, who can releaſe me from a ſituation ſo diſtreſſing; and to your goodneſs and juſtice I appeal, certain that neceſſity will excuſe the ſingularity of my conduct, and that I ſhall not appeal in vain."

The duke was embarraſſed—a flush of pride overſpread his countenance, and he ſeemed endeavouring to ſtifle the feelings that ſwelled his heart. "I had been prepared Madam," ſaid he, to expect a very different reception, and had certainly no reaſon to believe that the duke de Luovo was likely to ſue in vain. Since, however, Madam, you acknowledge that you have already diſpoſed of your affections, I ſhall certainly be very willing, if the marquis will releaſe me from our mutual engagements, to reſign you to a more favoured lover."

" Pardon

" Pardon me, my lord," ſaid Julia, bluſhing, " ſuffer me to"——" I am not eaſily deceived, Madam," interrupted the duke,—" your conduct can be attributed only to the influence of a prior attachment; and though for ſo young a lady, ſuch a circumſtance is ſomewhat extraordinary, I have certainly no right to arraign your choice. Permit me to wiſh you a good morning." He bowed low, and quitted the room. Julia now experienced a new diſtreſs; ſhe dreaded the reſentment of the marquis, when he ſhould be informed of her converſation with the duke, of whoſe character ſhe now judged too juſtly not to repent the confidence ſhe had repoſed in him.

The duke, on quitting Julia, went to the marquis, with whom he remained in converſation ſome hours. When he had left the caſtle, the marquis ſent for his daughter, and poured forth his reſentment with all the violence of threats,

and

and all the acrimony of contempt. So ſeverely did he ridicule the idea of her diſpoſing of her heart, and ſo dreadfully did he denounce vengeance on her diſobedience, that ſhe ſcarcely thought herſelf ſafe in his preſence. She ſtood trembling and confuſed, and heard his reproaches without the power to reply. At length the marquis informed her, that the nuptials would be ſolemnized on the third day from the preſent; and as he quitted the room, a flood of tears came to her relief, and ſaved her from fainting.

Julia paſſed the remainder of the day in her cloſet with Emilia. Night returned, but brought her no peace. She ſat long after the departure of Emilia; and to beguile recollection, ſhe ſelected a favourite author, endeavouring to revive thoſe ſenſations his page had once excited. She opened to a paſſage, the tender ſorrow of which was applicable to her own ſituation, and her tears flowed anew.

anew. Her grief was ſoon ſuſpended by apprehenſion. Hitherto a deadly ſilence had reigned through the caſtle, interrupted only by the wind, whoſe low ſound crept at intervals through the galleries. She now thought ſhe heard a foot-ſtep near her door, but preſently all was ſtill, for ſhe believed ſhe had been deceived by the wind. The ſucceeding moment, however, convinced her of her error, for ſhe diſtinguiſhed the low whiſperings of ſome perſons in the gallery. Her ſpirits, already weakened by ſorrow, deſerted her; ſhe was ſeized with an univerſal terror, and preſently afterwards a low voice called her from without, and the door was opened by Ferdinand.

She ſhrieked and fainted. On recovering, ſhe found herſelf ſupported by Ferdinand and Hippolitus, who had ſtolen this moment of ſilence and ſecurity to gain admittance to her preſence. Hippolitus came to urge a propoſal,

which

which deſpair only could have ſuggeſted. " Fly," ſaid he, " from the authority of a father who abuſes his power, and aſſert the liberty of choice, which nature aſſigned you. Let the deſperate ſituation of my hopes plead excuſe for the apparent boldneſs of this addreſs, and let the man who exiſts but for you, be the means of ſaving you from deſtruction. Alas! Madam, you are ſilent, and perhaps I have forfeited by this propoſal, the confidence I ſo lately flattered myſelf I poſſeſſed. If ſo, I will ſubmit to my fate in ſilence, and will to-morrow quit a ſcene which preſents only images of diſtreſs to my mind.

Julia could ſpeak but with her tears. A variety of ſtrong and contending emotions ſtruggled at her breaſt, and ſuppreſſed the power of utterance. Ferdinand ſeconded the propoſal of the count. " It is unneceſſary," my ſiſter, ſaid he, " to point out the miſery which awaits you here. I love you too well tamely

tamely to ſuffer you to be ſacrificed to ambition, and to a paſſion ſtill more hateful. I now glory in calling Hippolitus my friend—let me ere long receive him as a brother. I can give no ſtronger teſtimony of my eſteem for his character, than in the wiſh I now expreſs. Believe me he has a heart worthy of your acceptance—a heart noble and expanſive as your own." "Ah, ceaſe," ſaid Julia, "to dwell upon a character of whoſe worth I am fully ſenſible. Your kindneſs and his merit can never be forgotten by her whoſe misfortunes you have ſo generouſly ſuffered to intereſt you." She pauſed in ſilent heſitation. A ſenſe of delicacy made her heſitate upon the deciſion which her heart ſo warmly prompted. If ſhe fled with Hippolitus, ſhe would avoid one evil, and encounter another. She would eſcape the dreadful deſtiny awaiting her, but muſt, perhaps, ſully the purity of that reputation, which was

dearer

dearer to her than exiſtence. In a mind like her's, exquiſitely ſuſceptible of the pride of honour, this fear was able to counteract every other conſideration, and to keep her intentions in a ſtate of painful ſuſpenſe. She ſighed deeply, and continued ſilent. Hippolitus was alarmed by the calm diſtreſs which her countenance exhibited. "O! Julia," ſaid he, "relieve me from this dreadful ſuſpenſe!—ſpeak to me—explain this ſilence." She looked mournfully upon him—her lips moved, but no ſounds were uttered. As he repeated his queſtion, ſhe waved her hand, and ſunk back in her chair. She had not fainted, but continued ſome time in a ſtate of ſtupor not leſs alarming. The importance of the preſent queſtion, operating upon her mind, already harraſſed by diſtreſs, had produced a temporary ſuſpenſion of reaſon. Hippolitus hung over her in an agony not to be deſcribed, and Ferdinand vainly repeated her name. At length,

length, uttering a deep ſigh, ſhe raiſed herſelf, and like one awakened from a dream, gazed around her. Hippolitus thanked God fervently in his heart. "Tell me but that you are well," ſaid he, "and that I may dare to hope, and we will leave you to repoſe." "My ſiſter," ſaid Ferdinand, "conſult only your own wiſhes, and leave the reſt to me. Suffer a confidence in me to diſſipate the doubts with which you are agitated." "Ferdinand," ſaid Julia, emphatically, "how ſhall I expreſs the gratitude your kindneſs has excited?" "Your gratitude," ſaid he, "will be beſt ſhewn in conſulting your own wiſhes; for be aſſured, that whatever procures you happineſs, will moſt effectually eſtabliſh mine. Do not ſuffer the prejudices of education to render you miſerable. Believe that a choice which involves the happineſs or miſery of your whole life, ought to be decided only by yourſelf."

"Let

" Let us forbear for the preſent," ſaid Hippolitus, " to urge the ſubject. Repoſe is neceſſary for you, addreſſing Julia, " and I will not ſuffer a ſelfiſh conſideration any longer to with-hold you from it.—Grant me but this requeſt —that at this hour to-morrow night, I may return hither to receive my doom." Julia having conſented to receive Hippolitus and Ferdinand, they quitted the cloſet. In turning into the grand gallery, they were ſurpriſed by the appearance of a light, which gleamed upon the wall that terminated their view. It ſeemed to proceed from a door which opened upon a back ſtair-caſe. They puſhed on, but it almoſt inſtantly diſappeared, and upon the ſtair-caſe all was ſtill. They then ſeparated, and retired to their apartments, ſomewhat alarmed by this circumſtance, which induced them to ſuſpect that their viſit to Julia had been obſerved.

Julia paſſed the night in broken ſlumbers,

ſlumbers, and anxious conſideration. On her preſent deciſion hung the criſis of her fate. Her conſciouſneſs of the influence of Hippolitus over her heart, made her fear to indulge its predilection, by truſting to her own opinion of its fidelity. She ſhrunk from the diſgraceful idea of an elopement; yet ſhe ſaw no means of avoiding this, but by ruſhing upon the fate ſo dreadful to her imagination.

On the following night, when the inhabitants of the caſtle were retired to reſt, Hippolitus, whoſe expectation had lengthened the hours into ages, accompanied by Ferdinand, reviſited the cloſet. Julia, who had known no interval of reſt ſince they laſt left her, received them with much agitation. The vivid glow of health had fled her cheek, and was ſucceeded by a languid delicacy, leſs beautiful, but more intereſting. To the eager enquiries of Hippolitus, ſhe returned no anſwer, but faintly ſmil-

ing through her tears, preſented him her hand, and covered her face with her robe. "I receive it," cried he, "as the pledge of my happineſs;—yet —yet let your voice ratify the gift." "If the preſent conceſſion does not ſink me in your eſteem," ſaid Julia, in a low tone, "this hand is your's." "The conceſſion, my love, (for by that tender name I may now call you) would, if poſſible, raiſe you in my eſteem; but ſince that has been long incapable of addition, it can only heighten my opinion of myſelf, and increaſe my gratitude to you: gratitude which I will endeavour to ſhew by an anxious care of your happineſs, and by the tender attentions of a whole life. From this bleſſed moment," continued he, in a voice of rapture, "permit me, in thought, to hail you as my wife. From this moment let me baniſh every veſtige of ſorrow; —let me dry thoſe tears," gently preſſing her cheek with his lips, "never

to

to ſpring again."—The gratitude and joy which Ferdinand expreſſed upon this occaſion, united with the tenderneſs of Hippolitus to ſoothe the agitated ſpirits of Julia, and ſhe gradually recovered her complacency.

They now arranged their plan of eſcape; in the execution of which, no time was to be loſt, ſince the nuptials with the duke were to be ſolemnized on the day after the morrow. Their ſcheme, whatever it was that ſhould be adopted, they, therefore, reſolved to execute on the following night. But when they deſcended from the firſt warmth of enterprize, to minuter examination, they ſoon found the difficulties of the undertaking. The keys of the caſtle were kept by Robert, the confidential ſervant of the marquis, who every night depoſited them in an iron cheſt in his chamber. To obtain them by ſtratagem ſeemed impoſſible, and Ferdinand feared to tamper with

the honeſty of this man, who had been many years in the ſervice of the marquis. Dangerous as was the attempt, no other alternative appeared, and they were therefore compelled to reſt all their hopes upon the experiment. It was ſettled, that if the keys could be procured, Ferdinand and Hippolitus ſhould meet Julia in the cloſet; that they ſhould convey her to the ſea ſhore, from whence a boat, which was to be kept in waiting, would carry them to the oppoſite coaſt of Calabria, where the marriage might be ſolemnized without danger of interruption. But, as it was neceſſary that Ferdinand ſhould not appear in the affair, it was agreed that he ſhould return to the caſtle immediately upon the embarkation of his ſiſter. Having thus arranged their plan of operation, they ſeparated till the following night, which was to decide the fate of Hippolitus and Julia.

Julia, whoſe mind was ſoothed by the

the fraternal kindneſs of Ferdinand, and the tender aſſurances of Hippolitus, now experienced an interval of repoſe. At the return of day ſhe awoke refreſhed, and tolerably compoſed. She ſelected the few clothes which were neceſſary, and prepared them for her journey. A ſentiment of generoſity juſtified her in the reſerve ſhe preſerved to Emilia and Madame de Menon, whoſe faithfulneſs and attachment ſhe could not doubt, but whom ſhe diſdained to involve in the diſgrace that muſt fall upon them, ſhould their knowledge of her flight be diſcovered.

In the mean time the caſtle was a ſcene of confuſion. The magnificent preparations which were making for the nuptials engaged all eyes, and buſied all hands. The marchioneſs had the direction of the whole; and the alacrity with which ſhe acquitted herſelf, teſtified how much ſhe was pleaſed with the alliance, and created a ſuſpicion,

that it had not been concerted without ſome exertion of her influence. Thus was Julia deſigned the joint victim of ambition and illicit love.

The compoſure of Julia declined with the day, whoſe hours had crept heavily along. As the night drew on, her anxiety for the ſucceſs of Ferdinand's negociation with Robert increaſed to a painful degree. A variety of new emotions preſſed at her heart, and ſubdued her ſpirits. When ſhe bade Emilia good night, ſhe thought ſhe beheld her for the laſt time. The ideas of the diſtance which would ſeparate them, of the dangers ſhe was going to encounter, with a train of wild and fearful anticipations, crouded upon her mind, tears ſprang in her eyes, and it was with difficulty ſhe avoided betraying her emotions. Of Madame too, her heart took a tender farewell. At length ſhe heard the marquis retire to his apartment, and the doors belonging

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to the ſeveral chambers of the gueſts ſucceſſively cloſe. She marked with trembling attention the gradual change from buſtle to quiet, till all was ſtill.

She now held herſelf in readineſs to depart at the moment in which Ferdinand and Hippolitus, for whoſe ſteps in the gallery ſhe eagerly liſtened, ſhould appear. The caſtle clock ſtruck twelve. The ſound ſeemed to ſhake the pile. Julia felt it thrill upon her heart. "I hear you," ſighed ſhe, "for the laſt time." The ſtillneſs of death ſucceeded. She continued to liſten; but no ſound met her ear. For a conſiderable time ſhe ſat in a ſtate of anxious expectation not to be deſcribed. The clock chimed the ſucceſſive quarters; and her fear roſe to each additional ſound. At length ſhe heard it ſtrike one. Hollow was that ſound, and dreadful to her hopes; for neither Hippolitus nor Ferdinand appeared. She grew faint with fear and diſappointment. Her mind, which for

two hours had been kept upon the ſtretch of expectation, now reſigned itſelf to deſpair. She gently opened the door of her cloſet, and looked upon the gallery; but all was lonely and ſilent. It appeared that Robert had refuſed to be acceſſary to their ſcheme; and it was probable that he had betrayed it to the marquis. Overwhelmed with bitter reflections, ſhe threw herſelf upon the ſopha in the firſt diſtraction of deſpair. Suddenly ſhe thought ſhe heard a noiſe in the gallery; and as ſhe ſtarted from her poſture to liſten to the ſound, the door of her cloſet was gently opened by Ferdinand. "Come, my love," ſaid he, "the keys are ours, and we have not a moment to loſe; our delay has been unavoidable; but this is no time for explanation." Julia, almoſt fainting, gave her hand to Ferdinand; and Hippolitus, after ſome ſhort expreſſion of his thankfulneſs, followed. They paſſed the door of Madame's chamber;

chamber; and treading the gallery with ſlow and ſilent ſteps, deſcended to the hall. This they croſſed towards a door, after opening which, they were to find their way, through various paſſages, to a remote part of the caſtle, where a private door opened upon the walls. Ferdinand carried the ſeveral keys. They faſtened the hall door after them, and proceeded through a narrow paſſage terminating in a ſtair-caſe.

They deſcended, and had hardly reached the bottom, when they heard a loud noiſe at the door above, and preſently the voices of ſeveral people. Julia ſcarcely felt the ground ſhe trod on, and Ferdinand flew to unlock a door that obſtructed their way. He applied the different keys, and at length found the proper one; but the lock was ruſted, and refuſed to yield. Their diſtreſs was not now to be conceived. The noiſe above increaſed; and it ſeemed as if the people were forcing

the door. Hippolitus and Ferdinand vainly tried to turn the key. A ſudden craſh from above convinced them that the door had yielded, when making another deſparate effort, the key broke in the lock. Trembling and exhauſted, Julia gave herſelf up for loſt. As ſhe hung upon Ferdinand, Hippolitus vainly endeavoured to ſooth her—the noiſe ſuddenly ceaſed. They liſtened, dreading to hear the ſounds renewed; but, to their utter aſtoniſhment, the ſilence of the place remained undiſturbed. They had now time to breathe, and to conſider the poſſibility of effecting their eſcape; for from the marquis they had no mercy to hope. Hippolitus, in order to aſcertain whether the people had quitted the door above, began to aſcend the paſſage, in which he had not gone many ſteps when the noiſe was renewed with increaſed violence. He inſtantly retreated; and making a deſperate puſh at the door below, which obſtructed

ſtructed their paſſage, it ſeemed to yield, and by another effort of Ferdinand, burſt open. They had not an inſtant to loſe; for they now heard the ſteps of perſons deſcending the ſtairs. The avenue they were in opened into a kind of chamber, whence three paſſages branched, of which they immediately choſe the firſt. Another door now obſtructed their paſſage; and they were compelled to wait while Ferdinand applied the keys. "Be quick," ſaid Julia, "or we are loſt. O! if this lock too is ruſted!—" Hark!" ſaid Ferdinand. They now diſcovered what apprehenſion had before prevented them from perceiving, that the ſounds of purſuit were ceaſed, and all again was ſilent. As this could happen only by the miſtake of their purſuers, in taking the wrong *route*, they reſolved to preſerve their advantage, by concealing the light, which Ferdinand now covered with his cloak. The door was opened, and they paſſed on; but

they were perplexed in the intricacies of the place, and wandered about in vain endeavour to find their way. Often did they pauſe to liſten, and often did fancy give them ſounds of fearful import. At length they entered on the paſſage which Ferdinand knew led directly to a door that opened on the woods. Rejoiced at this certainty, they ſoon reached the ſpot which was to give them liberty.

Ferdinand turned the key; the door uncloſed, and, to their infinite joy, diſcovered to them the grey dawn. "Now, my love," ſaid Hippolitus, "you are ſafe, and I am happy."—Immediately a loud voice from without exclaimed, "Take, villain, the reward of your perfidy!" At the ſame inſtant Hippolitus received a ſword in his body, and uttering a deep ſigh, fell to the ground. Julia ſhrieked and fainted; Ferdinand drawing his ſword, advanced towards the aſſaſſin, upon whoſe counte-

countenance the light of his lamp then ſhone, and diſcovered to him his father! The ſword fell from his graſp, and he ſtarted back in an agony of horror. He was inſtantly ſurrounded, and ſeized by the ſervants of the marquis, while the marquis himſelf denounced vengeance upon his head, and ordered him to be thrown into the dungeon of the caſtle. At this inſtant the ſervants of the count, who were awaiting his arrival on the ſea ſhore, hearing the tumult, haſtened to the ſcene, and there beheld their beloved maſter lifeleſs and weltering in his blood. They conveyed the bleeding body, with loud lamentations, on board the veſſel which had been prepared for him, and immediately ſet ſail for Italy.

Julia, on recovering her ſenſes, found herſelf in a ſmall room, of which ſhe had no remembrance, with her maid weeping over her. Recollection, when it returned, brought to her mind an energy of grief which exceeded even

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all former conceptions of ſufferings. Yet her miſery was heightened by the intelligence which ſhe now received. She learned that Hippolitus had been borne away lifeleſs by his people, that Ferdinand was confined in a dungeon by order of the marquis, and that herſelf was a priſoner in a remote room, from which, on the day after the morrow, ſhe was to be removed to the chapel of the caſtle, and there ſacrificed to the ambition of her father, and the abſurd love of the duke de Luovo.

This accumulation of evil ſubdued each power of reſiſtance, and reduced Julia to a ſtate little ſhort of diſtraction. No perſon was allowed to approach her but her maid, and the ſervant who brought her food. Emilia, who, though ſhocked by Julia's apparent want of confidence, ſeverely ſympathized in her diſtreſs, ſolicited to ſee her; but the pain of denial was ſo ſharply aggravated by rebuke, that ſhe dared not again to urge the requeſt.

In the mean time Ferdinand, involved in the gloom of a dungeon, was reſigned to the painful recollection of the paſt, and a horrid anticipation of the future. From the reſentment of the marquis, whoſe paſſions were wild and terrible, and whoſe rank gave him an unlimited power of life and death in his own territories, Ferdinand had much to fear. Yet ſelfiſh apprehenſion ſoon yielded to a more noble ſorrow. He mourned the fate of Hippolitus, and the ſufferings of Julia. He could attribute the failure of their ſcheme only to the treachery of Robert, who had, however, met the wiſhes of Ferdinand, with ſtrong apparent ſincerity, and generous intereſt in the cauſe of Julia. On the night of the intended elopement he had configned the keys to Ferdinand, who, immediately on receiving them, went to the apartment of Hippolitus. There they were detained till after the clock had ſtruck one, by a low noiſe,

noiſe, which returned at intervals, and convinced them, that ſome part of the family was not yet retired to reſt. This noiſe was undoubtedly occaſioned by the people whom the marquis had employed to watch, and whoſe vigilance was too faithful to ſuffer the fugitives to eſcape. The very caution of Ferdinand defeated its purpoſe; for it is probable, that had he attemped to quit the caſtle by the common entrance, he might have eſcaped. The keys of the grand door, and thoſe of the courts, remaining in the poſſeſſion of Robert, the marquis was certain of the intended place of their departure; and was thus enabled to defeat their hopes at the very moment when they exulted in their ſucceſs.

When the marchioneſs learned the fate of Hippolitus, the reſentment of jealous paſſion, yielded to emotions of pity. Revenge was ſatisfied, and ſhe could now lament the ſufferings of a youth,

youth, whoſe perſonal charms had touched her heart as much as his virtues had diſappointed her hopes. Still true to paſſion, and inacceſſible to reaſon, ſhe poured upon the defenceleſs Julia her anger for that calamity of which ſhe herſelf was the unwilling cauſe. By a dextrous adaptation of her powers, ſhe had worked upon the paſſions of the marquis, ſo aa to render him relentleſs in the purſuit of ambitious purpoſes, and inſatiable in revenging his diſappointment. But the effects of her artifices exceeded her intention in exerting them; and when ſhe meant only to ſacrifice a rival to her love, ſhe found ſhe had given up its object to revenge.

CHAP.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE nuptial morn, ſo juſtly dreaded by Julia, and ſo impatiently awaited by the marquis, now arrived. The marriage was to be celebrated with a magnificence which demonſtrated the joy it occaſioned to the marquis. The caſtle was fitted up in a ſtyle of grandeur ſuperior to any thing that had been before ſeen in it. The neighbouring nobility were invited to an entertainment which was to conclude with a ſplendid ball and ſupper, and the gates were to be thrown open to all who choſe to partake of the bounty of the marquis. At an early hour the duke, attended by a numerous retinue, entered the caſtle. Ferdinand heard from his dungeon, where the rigour and the policy of the marquis ſtill confined him, the loud clattering of hoofs in the court yard above, the rolling of the carriage

carriage wheels, and all the tumultuous buſtle which the entrance of the duke occaſioned. He too well underſtood the cauſe of this uproar, and it awakened in him ſenſations reſembling thoſe which the condemned criminal feels, when his ears are aſſailed by the dreadful ſounds that precede his execution. When he was able to think of himſelf, he wondered by what means the marquis would reconcile his abſence to the gueſts. He, however, knew too well the diſſipated character of the Sicilian nobility, to doubt, that whatever ſtory ſhould be invented would be very readily believed by them; who, even if they knew the truth, would not ſuffer a diſcovery of their knowledge to interrupt the feſtivity which was offered them.

The marquis and marchioneſs received the duke in the outer hall, and conducted him to the ſaloon, where he partook of the refreſhments prepared for him, and from thence retired to the chapel,

pel. The marquis now withdrew to lead Julia to the altar, and Emilia was ordered to attend at the door of the chapel, in which the prieſt and a numerous company were already aſſembled. The marchioneſs, a prey to the turbulence of ſucceeding paſſions, exulted in the near completion of her favourite ſcheme. A diſappointment, however, was prepared for her, which would at once cruſh the triumph of her malice and her pride. The marquis, on entering the priſon of Julia, found it empty! His aſtoniſhment and indignation, upon the diſcovery, almoſt overpowered his reaſon. Of the ſervants of the caſtle, who were immediately ſummoned, he enquired concerning her eſcape, with a mixture of fury and ſorrow, which left them no opportunity for reply. They had, however, no information to give, but that her woman had not appeared during the whole morning. In the priſon were found the bridal habiliments which the marchioneſs herſelf had

had ſent on the preceeding night, together with a letter addreſſed to Emilia, which contained the following words:

"Adieu, dear Emilia; never more will you ſee your wretched ſiſter, who flies from the cruel fate now prepared for her, certain that ſhe can never meet one more dreadful.—In happineſs or miſery—in hope or deſpair—whatever may be your ſituation—ſtill remember me with pity and affection. Dear Emilia, adieu!—You will always be the ſiſter of my heart—may you never be the partner of my misfortunes!

While the marquis was reading this letter, the marchioneſs, who ſuppoſed the delay occaſioned by ſome oppoſition from Julia, flew to the apartment. By her orders all the habitable parts of the caſtle were explored, and ſhe herſelf aſſiſted in the ſearch. At length the intelligence was communicated to the chapel, and the confuſion became univerſal. The prieſt quitted the altar, and the company returned to the ſaloon.

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The letter when it was given to Emilia, excited emotions which ſhe found it impoſſible to diſguiſe, but which did not, however, protect her from a ſuſpicion that ſhe was concerned in the tranſaction, her knowledge of which this letter appeared intended to conceal.

The marquis immediately diſpatched ſervants upon the fleeteſt horſes of his ſtables, with directions to take different routes, and to ſcour every corner of the iſland in purſuit of the fugitives. When theſe exertions had ſomewhat quieted his mind, he began to conſider by what means Julia could have effected her eſcape. She had been confined in a ſmall room in a remote part of the caſtle, to which no perſon had been admitted but her own woman, and Robert, the confidential ſervant of the marquis. Even Liſette had not been ſuffered to enter, unleſs accompanied by Robert, in whoſe room, ſince the night of the fatal diſcovery, the keys had been regularly depoſited. Without them it was impoſ-

ſible

ſible ſhe could have eſcaped: the windows of the apartment being barred and grated, and opening into an inner court, at a prodigious height from the ground. Beſides, who could ſhe depend upon for protection—or whither could ſhe intend to fly for concealment?—The aſſociates of her former elopement were utterly unable to aſſiſt her even with advice. Ferdinand himſelf a priſoner, had been deprived of any means of intercourſe with her, and Hippolitus had been carried lifeleſs on board a veſſel which had immediately ſailed for Italy.

Robert, to whom the keys had been intruſted, was ſeverely interrogated by the marquis. He perſiſted in a ſimple and uniform declaration of his innocence; but as the marquis believed it impoſſible that Julia could have eſcaped without his knowledge, he was ordered into impriſonment till he ſhould confeſs the fact.

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The pride of the duke was ſeverely wounded by this elopement, which proved the exceſs of Julia's averſion, and compleated the diſgraceful circumſtances of his rejection. The marquis had carefully concealed from him her prior attempt at elopement, and her conſequent confinement; but the truth now burſt from diſguiſe, and ſtood revealed with bitter aggravation. The duke, fired with indignation at the duplicity of the marquis, poured forth his reſentment in terms of proud and bitter invective; and the marquis, galled by recent diſappointment, was in no mood to reſtrain the impetuoſity of his nature. He retorted with acrimony; and the conſequence would have been ſerious, had not the friends of each party interpoſed for their preſervation. The diſputants were at length reconciled; it was agreed to purſue Julia with united, and indefatigable ſearch; and that whenever ſhe ſhould be found, the nuptials ſhould be

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ſolemnized without further delay. With the character of the duke, this conduct was conſiſtent. His paſſions, inflamed by diſappointment, and ſtrengthened by repulſe, now defied the power of obſtacle; and thoſe conſiderations which would have operated with a more delicate mind to overcome its original inclination, ſerved only to encreaſe the violence of his.

Madame de Menon, who loved Julia with maternal affection, was an intereſted obſerver of all that paſſed at the caſtle. The cruel fate to which the marquis deſtined his daughter, ſhe had ſeverely lamented, yet ſhe could hardly rejoice to find that this had been avoided by elopement. She trembled for the future ſafety of her pupil; and her tranquillity, which was thus firſt diſturbed for the welfare of others, ſhe was not ſoon ſuffered to recover.

The marchioneſs had long nouriſhed a ſecret diſlike to Madame de Menon,

whoſe virtues were a ſilent reproof to her vices. The contrariety of their diſpoſition, created in the marchioneſs an averſion which would have amounted to contempt, had not that dignity of virtue which ſtrongly characterized the manners of Madame, compelled the former to fear what ſhe wiſhed to deſpiſe. Her conſcience whiſpered her that the diſlike was mutual; and ſhe now rejoiced in the opportunity which ſeemed to offer itſelf, of lowering the proud integrity of Madame's character. Pretending, therefore, to believe that ſhe had encouraged Ferdinand to diſobey his father's commands, and had been acceſſary to the elopement, ſhe accuſed her of theſe offences, and ſtimulated the marquis to reprehend her conduct. But the integrity of Madame de Menon was not to be queſtioned with impunity. Without deigning to anſwer the imputation, ſhe deſired to reſign an office of which ſhe was no longer conſidered worthy,

thy, and to quit the caſtle immediately. This the policy of the marquis would not ſuffer; and he was compelled to make ſuch ample conceſſions to Madame, as induced her for the preſent to continue at the caſtle.

The news of Julia's elopement at length reached the ears of Ferdinand, whoſe joy at this event was equalled only by his ſurprize. He loſt, for a moment, the ſenſe of his own ſituation, and thought only of the eſcape of Julia. But his ſorrow ſoon returned with accumulated force, when he recollected that Julia might then perhaps want that aſſiſtance, which his confinement alone could prevent his affording her.

The ſervants, who had been ſent in purſuit, returned to the caſtle without any ſatisfactory information. Week after week elapſed in fruitleſs ſearch, yet the duke was ſtrenuous in continuing the purſuit. Emiſſaries were diſpatched to Naples, and to the ſeveral

eſtates of the count Vereza, but they returned without any ſatisfactory information. The count had not been heard of ſince he quitted Naples for Sicily.

During theſe enquiries a new ſubject of diſturbance broke out in the caſtle of Mazzini. On the night ſo fatal to the hopes of Hippolitus and Julia, when the tumult was ſubſided, and all was ſtill, a light was obſerved by a ſervant as he paſſed by the window of the great ſtair-caſe in the way to his chamber, to glimmer through the caſement before noticed in the ſouthern buildings. While he ſtood obſerving it, it vaniſhed, and preſently re-appeared. The former myſterious circumſtances relative to theſe buildings ruſhed upon his mind; and fired with wonder, he rouſed ſome of his fellow ſervants to come and behold this phenomenon.

As they gazed in ſilent terror, the light diſappeared, and ſoon after, they ſaw a ſmall door belonging to the ſouth tower

tower open, and a figure bearing a light iſſue forth, which gliding along the caſtle walls, was quickly loſt to their view. Overcome with fear, they hurried back to their chambers, and revolved all the late wonderful occurrences. They doubted not, that this was the figure formerly ſeen by the lady Julia. The ſudden change of Madame de Menon's apartments had not paſſed unobſerved by the ſervants, but they now no longer heſitated to what to attribute the removal. They collected each various and uncommon circumſtance attendant on this part of the fabric; and, comparing them with the preſent, their ſuperſtitious fears were confirmed, and their terror heightened to ſuch a degree, that many of them reſolved to quit the ſervice of the marquis.

The marquis ſurprized at this ſudden deſertion, enquired into its cauſe, and learned the truth. Shocked by this diſcovery, he yet reſolved to prevent, if

poſſible, the ill effects which might be expected from a circulation of the report. To this end it was neceſſary to quiet the minds of his people, and to prevent their quitting his ſervice. Having ſeverely reprehended them for the idle apprehenſion they encouraged, he told them that, to prove the fallacy of their ſurmiſes, he would lead them over that part of the caſtle which was the ſubject of their fears, and ordered them to attend him at the return of night in the north hall. Emilia and Madame de Menon ſuprized at this procedure, awaited the iſſue in ſilent expectation.

The ſervants in obedience to the commands of the marquis, aſſembled at night in the north hall. The air of deſolation which reigned through the ſouth buildings, and the circumſtance of their having been for ſo many years ſhut up, would naturally tend to inſpire awe; but to theſe people, who firmly believed them to be the haunt of an unquiet

unquiet ſpirit, terror was the predominant ſentiment.

The marquis now appeared with the keys of theſe buildings in his hands, and every heart thrilled with wild expectation. He ordered Robert to precede him with a torch, and the reſt of the ſervants following, he paſſed on. A pair of iron gates were unlocked, and they proceeded through a court, whoſe pavement was wildly overgrown with long graſs, to the great door of the ſouth fabric. Here they met with ſome difficulty, for the lock, which had not been turned for many years, was ruſted.

During this interval, the ſilence of expectation ſealed the lips of all preſent. At length the lock yielded. That door which had not been paſſed for ſo many years, creaked heavily upon its hinges, and diſcloſed the hall of black marble which Ferdinand had formerly croſſed. "Now," cried the marquis, in a tone of irony as he entered, "expect to en-

counter the ghoſts of which you tell me; but if you fail to conquer them, prepare to quit my ſervice. The people who live with me, ſhall at leaſt have courage and ability ſufficient to defend me from theſe ſpiritual attacks. All I apprehend is, that the enemy will not appear, and in this caſe your valour will go untried."

No one dared to anſwer, but all followed, in ſilent fear, the marquis, who aſcended the great ſtair-caſe, and entered the gallery. "Unlock that door," ſaid he, pointing to one on the left, "and we will ſoon unhouſe theſe ghoſts." Robert applied the key, but his hand ſhook ſo violently that he could not turn it. "Here is a fellow," cried the marquis, "fit to encounter a whole legion of ſpirits. Do you, Anthony, take the key, and try your valour."

"Pleaſe you, my lord," replied Anthony, "I never was a good one at unlock-

unlocking a door in my life, but here is Gregory will do it." "No, my lord, an' pleaſe you," ſaid Gregory, here is Richard." "Stand off," ſaid the marquis, "I will ſhame your cowardice, and do it myſelf."

Saying this he turned the key, and was ruſhing on, but the door refuſed to yield; it ſhook under his hands, and ſeemed as if partially held by ſome perſon on the other ſide. The marquis was ſurprized, and made ſeveral efforts to move it, without effect. He then ordered his ſervants to burſt it open, but, ſhrinking back with one accord, they cried "for God's ſake, my lord, go no farther; we are ſatisfied here are no ghoſts, only let us get back."

"It is now then my turn to be ſatisfied," replied the marquis, "and till I am, not one of you ſhall ſtir. Open me that door." "My lord!"—"Nay," ſaid the marquis, aſſuming a look of ſtern authority—"diſpute not my commands. I am not to be trifled with."

They now ſtepped forward, and applied their ſtrength to the door, when a loud and ſudden noiſe burſt from within, and reſounded through the hollow chambers! The men ſtarted back in affright, and were ruſhing headlong down the ſtair-caſe, when the voice of the marquis arreſted their flight. They returned with hearts palpitating with terror. "Obſerve what I ſay," ſaid the marquis, "and behave like men. Yonder door," pointing to one at ſome diſtance, "will lead us through other rooms to this chamber—unlock it therefore, for I will know the cauſe of theſe ſounds." Shocked at this determination, the ſervants again ſupplicated the marquis to go no farther; and to be obeyed, he was obliged to exert all his authority. The door was opened, and diſcovered a long narrow paſſage, into which they deſcended by a few ſteps. It led to a gallery that terminated in a back ſtair-

caſe,

caſe, where ſeveral doors appeared, one of which the marquis uncloſed. A ſpacious chamber appeared beyond, whoſe walls, decayed and diſcoloured by the damps, exhibited a melancholy proof of deſertion.

They paſſed on through a long ſuite of lofty and noble apartments, which were in the ſame ruinous condition. At length they came to the chamber whence the noiſe had iſſued. "Go firſt, Robert, with the light," ſaid the marquis, as they approached the door; "this is the key." Robert trembled —but obeyed, and the other ſervants followed in ſilence. They ſtopped a moment at the door to liſten, but all was ſtill within. The door was opened, and diſcloſed a large vaulted chamber, nearly reſembling thoſe they had paſſed, and on looking round, they diſcovered at once the cauſe of the alarm.—A part of the decayed roof was fallen in, and the ſtones and rubbiſh of the ruin fall-

ing againſt the gallery door, obſtructed the paſſage. It was evident, too, whence the noiſe which occaſioned their terror had ariſen; the looſe ſtones which were piled againſt the door being ſhook by the effort made to open it, had given way, and rolled to the floor.

After ſurveying the place, they returned to the back ſtairs, which they deſcended, and having purſued the ſeveral windings of a long paſſage, found themſelves again in the marble hall. "Now," ſaid the marquis, "what think ye? What evil ſpirits infeſt theſe walls? Henceforth be cautious how ye credit the phantaſms of idleneſs, for ye may not always meet with a maſter who will condeſcend to undeceive ye." "They acknowledged the goodneſs of the marquis, and profeſſing themſelves perfectly conſcious of the error of their former ſuſpicions, deſired they might ſearch no farther. "I chuſe to leave nothing to your imagination," replied the

the marquis, leſt hereafter it ſhould betray you into a ſimilar error. Follow me, therefore; you ſhall ſee the whole of theſe buildings." Saying this, he led them to the ſouth tower. They remembered, that from a door of this tower, the figure which cauſed their alarm had iſſued; and notwithſtanding the late aſſertion of their ſuſpicions being removed, fear ſtill operated powerfully upon their minds, and they would willingly have been excuſed from farther reſearch. "Would any of you chuſe to explore this tower?" ſaid the marquis, pointing to the broken ſtaircaſe; "for myſelf, I am mortal, and therefore fear to venture; but you, who hold communion with diſembodied ſpirits, may partake ſomething of their nature; if ſo, you may paſs without apprehenſion where the ghoſt has probably paſſed before." They ſhrunk at this reproof, and were ſilent.

The marquis turning to a door on his

his right hand, ordered it to be unlocked. It opened upon the country, and the ſervants knew it to be the ſame whence the figure had appeared. Having re-locked it, "Lift that trap-door; we will deſcend into the vaults," ſaid the marquis. "What trap-door, my Lord?" ſaid Robert, with encreaſed agitation; "I ſee none." The marquis pointed, and Robert perceived a door which lay almoſt concealed beneath the ſtones that had fallen from the ſtaircaſe above. He began to remove them, when the marquis ſuddenly turning—"I have already ſufficiently indulged your folly," ſaid he, "and am weary of this buſineſs. If you are capable of receiving conviction from truth, you muſt now be convinced that theſe buildings are not the haunt of a ſupernatural being; and if you are incapable, it would be entirely uſeleſs to proceed. You, Robert, may therefore ſpare yourſelf the trouble of removing the rubbiſh; we will quit this part of the fabric."

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The ſervants joyfully obeyed, and the marquis locking the ſeveral doors, returned with the keys to the habitable part of the caſtle.

Every enquiry after Julia had hitherto proved fruitleſs; and the imperious nature of the marquis, heightened by the preſent vexation, became intolerably oppreſſive to all around him. As the hope of recovering Julia declined, his opinion that Emilia had aſſiſted her to eſcape ſtrengthened, and he inflicted upon her the ſeverity of his unjuſt ſuſpicions. She was ordered to confine herſelf to her apartment till her innocence ſhould be cleared, or her ſiſter diſcovered. From Madame de Menon ſhe received a faithful ſympathy, which was the ſole relief of her oppreſſed heart. Her anxiety concerning Julia daily encreaſed, and was heightened into the moſt terrifying apprehenſions for her ſafety. She knew of no perſon in whom her ſiſter could confide, or of any

any place where ſhe could find protection; the moſt deplorable evils were therefore to be expected.

One day, as ſhe was ſitting at the window of her apartment, engaged in melancholy reflection, ſhe ſaw a man riding towards the caſtle on full ſpeed. Her heart beat with fear and expectation. for his haſte made her ſuſpect he brought intelligence of Julia; and ſhe could ſcarcely refrain from breaking through the command of the marquis, and ruſhing into the hall to learn ſomething of his errand. She was right in her conjecture; the perſon ſhe had ſeen was a ſpy of the marquis's, and came to inform him that the lady Julia was at that time concealed in a cottage of the foreſt of Marentino. The marquis, rejoiced at this intelligence, gave the man a liberal reward. He learned alſo, that ſhe was accompanied by a young cavalier; which circumſtance ſurprized him exceedingly; for he knew of no perſon except

except the count de Vereza with whom ſhe could have entruſted herſelf, and the count had fallen by his ſword! He immediately ordered a party of his people to accompany the meſſenger to the foreſt of Marentino, and to ſuffer neither Julia nor the cavalier to eſcape them, on pain of death.

When the duke de Luovo was informed of this diſcovery, he entreated and obtained permiſſion of the marquis to join in the purſuit. He immediately ſet out on the expedition, armed, and followed by a number of his ſervants. He reſolved to encounter all hazards, and to practiſe the moſt deſperate extremes, rather than fail in the object of his enterprize. In a ſhort time he overtook the marquis's people, and they proceeded together with all poſſible ſpeed. The foreſt lay ſeveral leagues diſtant from the caſtle of Mazzini, and the day was cloſing when they entered upon the borders. The thick foliage of the

the trees ſpread a deeper ſhade around; and they were obliged to proceed with caution. Darkneſs had long fallen upon the earth when they reached the cottage, to which they were directed by a light that glimmered from afar among the trees. The duke left his people at ſome diſtance; and diſmounting, and accompanied only by one ſervant, approached the cottage. When he reached it he ſtopped, and looking through the window, obſerved a man and woman in the habit of peaſants ſeated at their ſupper. They were converſing with earneſtneſs, and the duke, hoping to obtain farther intelligence of Julia, endeavoured to liſten to their diſcourſe. They were praiſing the beauty of a lady, whom the duke did not doubt to be Julia, and the woman ſpoke much in praiſe of the cavalier. "He has a noble heart," ſaid ſhe; "and I am ſure, by his look, belongs to ſome great family." "Nay," replied her companion,

nion, "the lady is as good as he. I have been at Palermo, and ought to know what great folks are, and if ſhe is not one of them, never take my word again. Poor thing, how ſhe does take on! It made my heart ach to ſee her."

They were ſome time ſilent. The duke knocked at the door, and enquired of the man who opened it concerning the lady and cavalier then in his cottage. He was aſſured there were no other perſons in the cottage than thoſe he then ſaw. The duke perſiſted in affirming that the perſons he enquired for were there concealed; which the man being as reſolute in denying, he gave the ſignal, and his people approached, and ſurrounded the cottage. The peaſants terrified by this circumſtance, confeſſed that a lady and cavalier, ſuch as the duke deſcribed, had been for ſome time concealed in the cottage; but that they were now departed.

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Suſpicious of the truth of the latter aſſertion, the duke ordered his people to ſearch the cottage, and that part of the foreſt contiguous to it. The ſearch ended in diſappointment. The duke, however, reſolved to obtain all poſſible information concerning the fugitives; and aſſuming, therefore, a ſtern air, bade the peaſant, on pain of inſtant death, diſcover all he knew of them.

The man replied, that on a very dark and ſtormy night, about a week before, two perſons had come to the cottage, and deſired ſhelter. That they were unattended; but ſeemed to be perſons of conſequence in diſguiſe. That they paid very liberally for what they had; and that they departed from the cottage a few hours before the arrival of the duke.

The duke enquired concerning the courſe they had taken, and having received information, re-mounted his horſe, and ſet forward in purſuit. The road

road lay for ſeveral leagues through the foreſt, and the darkneſs, and the probability of encountering banditti, made the journey dangerous. About the break of day, they quitted the foreſt, and entered upon a wild and mountainous country, in which they travelled ſome miles without perceiving a hut, or a human being. No veſtige of cultivation appeared, and no ſounds reached them but thoſe of their horſes feet, and the roaring of the winds through the deep foreſts that overhung the mountains. The purſuit was uncertain, but the duke reſolved to perſevere.

They came at length to a cottage, where he repeated his enquiries, and learned to his ſatisfaction that two perſons, ſuch as he deſcribed, had ſtopped there for refreſhment about two hours before. He found it now neceſſary to ſtop for the ſame purpoſe. Bread and milk, the only proviſions of the place, were ſet before him, and his attendants

would

would have been well contented, had there been ſufficient of this homely fare to have ſatisfied their hunger.

Having diſpatched an haſty meal, they again ſet forward in the way pointed out to them as the route of the fugitives. The country aſſumed a more civilized aſpect. Corn, vineyards, olives, and groves of mulberry-trees adorned the hills. The vallies, luxuriant in ſhade, were frequently embelliſhed by the windings of a lucid ſtream, and diverſified by cluſters of half-ſeen cottages. Here the riſing turrets of a monaſtery appeared above the thick trees with which they were ſurrounded; and there the ſavage wilds, the travellers had paſſed, formed a bold and picturesque back-ground to the ſcene.

To the queſtions put by the duke to the ſeveral perſons he met, he received anſwers that encouraged him to proceed. At noon he halted at a village to refreſh himſelf and his people. He could

could gain no intelligence of Julia, and was perplexed which way to chuſe; but determined at length to purſue the road he was then in, and accordingly again ſet forward. He travelled ſeveral miles without meeting any perſon who could give the neceſſary information, and began to deſpair of ſucceſs. The lengthened ſhadows of the mountains, and the fading light, gave ſignals of declining day; when having gained the ſummit of a high hill, he obſerved two perſons travelling on horſe-back in the plains below. On one of them he diſtinguiſhed the habiliments of a woman; and in her air he thought he diſcovered that of Julia. While he ſtood attentively ſurveying them, they looked towards the hill, when, as if urged by a ſudden impulſe of terror, they ſet off on full ſpeed over the plains. The duke had no doubt that theſe were the perſons he ſought; and he, therefore, ordered ſome of his people to purſue them,

them, and puſhed his horſe into a full gallop. Before he reached the plains, the fugitives, winding round an abrupt hill, were loſt to his view. The duke continued his courſe, and his people, who were a conſiderable way before him, at length reached the hill, behind which the two perſons had diſappeared. No traces of them were to be ſeen, and they entered a narrow defile between two ranges of high and ſavage mountains; on the right of which a rapid ſtream rolled along, and broke with its deep reſounding murmurs the ſolemn ſilence of the place. The ſhades of evening now fell thick, and the ſcene was ſoon enveloped in darkneſs; but to the duke, who was animated by a ſtrong and impetuous paſſion, theſe were unimportant circumſtances. Although he knew that the wilds of Sicily were frequently infeſted with banditti, his numbers made him fearleſs of attack. Not ſo his attendants, many of whom, as the dark-

darkneſs increaſed, teſtified emotions not very honourable to their courage; ſtarting at every buſh, and believing it concealed a murderer. They endeavoured to diſſuade the duke from proceeding, expreſſing uncertainty of their being in the right route, and recommending the open plains. But the duke, whoſe eye had been vigilant to mark the flight of the fugitives, and who was not to be diſſuaded from his purpoſe, quickly repreſſed their arguments. They continued their courſe without meeting a ſingle perſon.

The moon now roſe, and afforded them a ſhadowy imperfect view of the ſurrounding objects. The proſpect was gloomy and vaſt, and not a human habitation met their eyes. They had now loſt every trace of the fugitives, and found themſelves bewildered in a wild and ſavage country. Their only remaining care was to extricate themſelves from ſo forlorn a ſituation, and they liſ-

tened at every ſtep with anxious attention for ſome ſound that might diſcover to them the haunts of men. They liſtened in vain; the ſtillneſs of night was undiſturbed but by the wind, which broke at intervals in low and hollow murmurs from among the mountains.

As they proceeded with ſilent caution, they perveived a light break from among the rocks at ſome diſtance. The duke heſitated whether to approach, ſince it might probably proceed from a party of the banditti with which theſe mountains were ſaid to be infeſted. While he heſitated, it diſappeared; but he had not advanced many ſteps when it returned. He now perceived it to iſſue from the mouth of a cavern, and caſt a bright reflection upon the overhanging rocks and ſhrubs.

He diſmounted, and followed by two of his people, leaving the reſt at ſome diſtance, moved with ſlow and ſilent ſteps towards the cave. As he drew near,

near, he heard the ſound of many voices in high carouſal. Suddenly the uproar ceaſed, and the following words were ſung by a clear and manly voice:

SONG.

Pour the rich libation high;
The ſparkling cup to Bacchus fill;
His joys ſhall dance in ev'ry eye,
And chace the forms of future ill!

Quick the magic raptures ſteal
O'er the fancy-kindling brain,
Warm the heart with ſocial zeal,
And ſong and laughter reign.

Then viſions of pleaſure ſhall float on our ſight,
While light bounding our ſpirits ſhall flow;
And the god ſhall impart a fine ſenſe of delight
Which in vain *ſober* mortals would know.

The laſt verſe was repeated in loud chorus. The duke liſtened with aſtoniſhment! Such ſocial merriment amid a ſcene of ſuch ſavage wildneſs, appeared more like enchantment than reality. He would not have heſitated to pronounce this a party of banditti, had not the

delicacy of expreſſion preſerved in the ſong, appeared unattainable by men of their claſs.

He had now a full view of the cave; and the moment which convinced him of his error, ſerved alſo to encreaſe his ſurprize. He beheld, by the light of a fire, a party of banditti ſeated within the deepeſt receſs of the cave round a rude kind of table formed in the rock. The table was ſpread with proviſions, and they were regaling themſelves with great eagerneſs and joy. The countenances of the men exhibited a ſtrange mixture of fierceneſs and ſociality; and the duke could almoſt have imagined he beheld in theſe robbers a band of the early Romans before knowledge had civilized, or luxury had ſoftened them. But he had not much time for meditation; a ſenſe of his danger bade him fly while to fly was yet in his power. As he turned to depart, he obſerved two ſaddle horſes grazing upon the herb-

age

age near the mouth of the cave. It inſtantly occurred to him that they belonged to Julia and her companion. He heſitated, and at length determined to linger awhile, and liſten to the converſation of the robbers, hoping from thence to have his doubts reſolved. They talked for ſome time in a ſtrain of high conviviality, and recounted in exultation many of their exploits. They deſcribed alſo the behaviour of ſeveral people whom they had robbed, with highly ludicrous alluſions, and with much rude humour, while the cave reechoed with loud burſts of laughter and applauſe. They were thus engaged in tumultuous merriment, till one of them curſing the ſcanty plunder of their late adventure, but praiſing the beauty of a lady, they all lowered their voices together, and ſeemed as if debating upon a point uncommonly intereſting to them. The paſſions of the duke were rouſed, and he became certain that it

was Julia, of whom they had ſpoken. In the firſt impulſe of feeling he drew his ſword; but recollecting the number of his adverſaries, reſtrained his fury. He was turning from the cave with a deſign of ſummoning his people, when the light of the fire glittering upon the bright blade of his weapon, caught the eye of one of the banditti. He ſtarted from his ſeat, and his comrades inſtantly riſing in conſternation, diſcovered the duke. They ruſhed with loud vociferation towards the mouth of the cave. He endeavoured to eſcape to his people; but two of the banditti mounting the horſes which were grazing near, quickly overtook and ſeized him. His dreſs and air proclaimed him to be a perſon of diſtinction; and, rejoicing in their proſpect of plunder, they forced him towards the cave. Here their comrades awaited them; but what were the emotions of the duke, when he diſcovered in the perſon of the principal robber

robber his own ſon! who, to eſcape the galling ſeverity of his father, had fled from his caſtle ſome years before, and had not been heard of ſince.

He had placed himſelf at the head of a party of banditti, and, pleaſed with the liberty which till then he had never taſted, and with the power which his new ſituation afforded him, he became ſo much attached to this wild and lawleſs mode of life, that he determined never to quit it till death ſhould diſſolve thoſe ties which now made his rank only oppreſſive. This event ſeemed at ſo great a diſtance, that he ſeldom allowed himſelf to think of it. Whenever it ſhould happen, he had no doubt that he might either reſume his rank without danger of diſcovery, or might juſtify his preſent conduct as a frolic which a few acts of generoſity would eaſily excuſe. He knew his power would then place him beyond the reach of cenſure, in a country where the people are ac-

cuſtomed to implicit ſubordination, and ſeldom dare to ſcrutinize the actions of the nobility.

His ſenſations, however, on diſcovering his father, were not very pleaſing; but proclaiming the duke, he protected him from farther outrage.

With the duke, whoſe heart was a ſtranger to the ſofter affections, indignation uſurped the place of parental feeling. His pride was the only paſſion affected by the diſcovery; and he had the raſhneſs to expreſs the indignation, which the conduct of his ſon had excited, in terms of unreſtrained invective. The banditti, inflamed by the opprobium with which he loaded their order, threatened inſtant puniſhment to his temerity; and the authority of Riccardo could hardly reſtrain them within the limits of forbearance.

The menaces, and at length entreaties of the duke, to prevail with his ſon to abandon his preſent way of life, were equally

equally ineffectual. Secure in his own power, Riccardo laughed at the firſt, and was inſenſible to the latter; and his father was compelled to relinquiſh the attempt. The duke, however, boldly and paſſionately accuſed him of having plundered and ſecreted a lady and cavalier, his friends, at the ſame time deſcribing Julia, for whoſe liberation he offered large rewards. Riccardo denied the fact, which ſo much exaſperated the duke, that he drew his ſword with an intention of plunging it in the breaſt of his ſon. His arm was arreſted by the ſurrounding banditti, who half unſheathed their ſwords, and ſtood ſuſpended in an attitude of menace. The fate of the father now hung upon the voice of the ſon. Riccardo raiſed his arm, but inſtantly dropped it, and turned away. The banditti ſheathed their weapons, and ſtepped back.

Riccardo ſolemnly ſwearing that he knew nothing of the perſons deſcribed,

the duke at length became convinced of the truth of the aſſertion, and departing from the cave, rejoined his people. All the impetuous paſſions of his nature were rouſed and inflamed by the diſcovery of his ſon in a ſituation ſo wretchedly diſgraceful. Yet it was his pride rather than his virtue that was hurt; and when he wiſhed him dead, it was rather to ſave himſelf from diſgrace, than his ſon from the real indignity of vice. He had no means of reclaiming him; to have attempted it by force, would have been at this time the exceſs of temerity, for his attendants, though numerous, were undiſciplined, and would have fallen certain victims to the power of a ſavage and dexterous banditti.

With thoughts agitated in fierce and agonizing conflict, he purſued his journey; and having loſt all trace of Julia, ſought only for an habitation which might ſhelter him from the night, and afford

afford neceſſary refreſhment for himſelf and his people. With this, however, there appeared little hope of meeting.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE night grew ſtormy. The hollow winds ſwept over the mountains, and blew bleak and cold around; the clouds were driven ſwiftly over the face of the moon, and the duke and his people were frequently involved in total darkneſs. They had travelled on ſilently and dejectedly for ſome hours, and were bewildered in the wilds, when they ſuddenly heard the bell of a monaſtery chiming for midnight prayer. Their hearts revived at the ſound, which they endeavoured to follow, but they had not gone far, when the gale wafted it away, and they were abandoned to the uncertain guide of their own conjectures.

They had purſued for ſome time the way which they judged led to the monaſtery, when the note of the bell returned upon the wind, and diſcovered

to

to them that they had miſtaken their route. After much wandering and difficulty they arrived, overcome with wearineſs, at the gates of a large and gloomy fabric. The bell had ceaſed, and all was ſtill. By the moon light, which through broken clouds now ſtreamed upon the building, they became convinced it was the monaſtery they had ſought, and the duke himſelf ſtruck loudly upon the gate.

Several minutes elapſed, no perſon appeared, and he repeated the ſtroke. A ſtep was preſently heard within, the gate was unbarred, and a thin ſhivering figure preſented itſelf. The duke ſolicited admiſſion, but was refuſed, and reprimanded for diſturbing the convent at the hour ſacred to prayer. He then made known his rank, and bade the friar inform the Superior that he requeſted ſhelter from the night. The friar, ſuſpicious of deceit, and apprehenſive of robbers, refuſed with much firm-

firmneſs, and repeated that the convent was engaged in prayer; he had almoſt cloſed the gate, when the duke, whom hunger and fatigue made deſperate, ruſhed by him, and paſſed into the court. It was his intention to preſent himſelf to the Superior, and he had not proceeded far when the ſound of laughter, and of many voices in loud and mirthful jollity, attracted his ſteps. It led him through ſeveral paſſages to a door, through the crevices of which light appeared. He paufed a moment, and heard within a wild uproar of merriment and ſong. He was ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, and could ſcarcely credit his ſenſes!

He uncloſed the door, and beheld in a large room, well lighted, a company of friars, dreſt in the habit of their order, placed round a table, which was profuſely ſpread with wines and fruits. The Superior, whoſe habit diſtinguiſhed him from his aſſociates, appeared at the head

head of the table. He was lifting a large goblet of wine to his lips, and was roaring out, "Profuſion and confuſion," at the moment when the duke entered. His appearance cauſed a general alarm; that part of the company who were not too much intoxicated, aroſe from their ſeats; and the Superior, dropping the goblet from his hands, endeavoured to aſſume a look of auſterity, which his roſy countenance belied. The duke received a reprimand, delivered in the liſping accents of intoxication, and embelliſhed with frequent interjections of hiccup. He made known his quality, his diſtreſs, and ſolicited a night's lodging for himſelf and his people. When the Superior underſtood the diſtinction of his gueſt, his features relaxed into a ſmile of joyous welcome; and taking him by the hand, he placed him by his ſide.

The table was quickly covered with luxurious proviſions, and orders were given

given that the duke's people ſhould be admitted, and taken care of. He was regaled with a variety of the fineſt wines, and at length, highly elevated by monaſtic hoſpitality, he retired to the apartment allotted him, leaving the Superior in a condition which precluded all ceremony.

He departed in the morning, very well pleaſed with the accommodating principles of monaſtic religion. He had been told that the enjoyment of the good things of this life was the ſureſt ſign of our gratitude to Heaven; and it appeared, that within the walls of a Sicilian monaſtery, the precept and the practice were equally enforced.

He was now at a loſs what courſe to chuſe, for he had no clue to direct him towards the object of his purſuit; but hope, ſtill invigorated, and urged him to perſeverance. He was not many leagues from the coaſt; and it occurred to him, that the fugitives might make towards

towards it with a deſign of eſcaping into Italy. He therefore determined to travel towards the ſea, and proceed along the ſhore.

At the houſe where he ſtopped to dine, he learned that two perſons, ſuch as he deſcribed, had halted there about an hour before his arrival, and had ſet off again in much ſeeming haſte. They had taken the road towards the coaſt, whence it was obvious to the duke they deſigned to embark. He ſtayed not to finiſh the repaſt ſet before him, but inſtantly re-mounted to continue the purſuit.

To the enquiries he made of the perſons he chanced to meet, favourable anſwers were returned for a time, but he was at length bewildered in uncertainty, and travelled for ſome hours in a direction which chance, rather than judgment, prompted him to take.

The falling evening again confuſed his proſpects, and unſettled his hopes.

hopes. The ſhades were deepened by thick and heavy clouds that enveloped the horizon, and the deep ſounding air foretold a tempeſt. The thunder now rolled at a diſtance, and the accumulated clouds grew darker. The duke and his people were on a wild and dreary heath, round which they looked in vain for ſhelter, the view being terminated on all ſides by the ſame deſolate ſcene. They rode, however, as hard as their horſes would carry them; and at length one of the attendants eſpied on the ſkirts of the waſte a large manſion, towards which they immediately directed their courſe.

They were overtaken by the ſtorm, and at the moment when they reached the building, a peal of thunder, which ſeemed to ſhake the pile, burſt over their heads. They now found themſelves in a large and ancient manſion, which ſeemed totally deſerted, and was falling to decay. The edifice was diſtin-

diſtinguiſhed by an air of magnificence, which ill accorded with the ſurrounding ſcenery, and which excited ſome degree of ſurprize in the mind of the duke, who, however fully juſtified the owner in forſaking a ſpot, which preſented to the eye only views of rude and deſolated nature.

The ſtorm encreaſed with much violence, and threatened to detain the duke a priſoner in his preſent habitation for the night. The hall, of which he and his people had taken poſſeſſion, exhibited in every feature marks of ruin and deſolation. The marble pavement was in many places broken, the walls were mouldering in decay, and round the high and ſhattered windows the long graſs waved to the lonely gale. Curioſity led him to explore the receſſes of the manſion. He quitted the hall, and entered upon a paſſage which conducted him to a remote part of the edifice. He wandered through the wild and ſpacious

apart-

apartments in gloomy meditation, and often paused in wonder at the remains of magnificence which he beheld.

The mansion was irregular and vast, and he was bewildered in its intricacies. In endeavouring to find his way back, he only perplexed himself more, till at length he arrived at a door, which he believed led into the hall he first quitted. On opening it, he discovered by the faint light of the moon, a large place, which he scarcely knew whether to think a cloister, a chapel, or a hall. It retired in long perspective, in arches, and terminated in a large iron gate, through which appeared the open country.

The lightnings flashed thick and blue around, which together with the thunder that seemed to rend the wide arch of Heaven, and the melancholy aspect of the place, so awed the duke, that he involuntarily called to his people. His voice was answered only by

by the deep echoes which ran in murmurs through the place, and died away at a diſtance; and the moon now ſinking behind a cloud, left him in total darkneſs.

He repeated the call more loudly, and at length heard the approach of footſteps. A few moments relieved him from his anxiety, for his people appeared. The ſtorm was yet loud, and the heavy and ſulphureous appearance of the atmoſphere promiſed no ſpeedy abatement of it. The duke endeavoured to reconcile himſelf to paſs the night in his preſent ſituation, and ordered a fire to be lighted in the place he was in. This with much difficulty was accompliſhed. He then threw himſelf on the pavement before it, and tried to endure the abſtinence which he had ſo ill obſerved in the monaſtery on the preceding night. But to his great joy his attendants, more provident than himſelf, had not ſcrupled to accept a comfortable

ble quantity of proviſions which had been offered them at the monaſtery; and which they now drew forth from a wallet. They were ſpread upon the pavement; and the duke, after refreſhing himſelf, delivered up the remains to his people. Having ordered them to watch by turns at the gate, he wrapt his cloak round him, and reſigned himſelf to repoſe.

The night paſſed without any diſturbance. The morning aroſe freſh and bright; the Heavens exhibited a clear and unclouded concave; even the wild heath, refreſhed by the late rains, ſmiled around, and ſent up with the morning gale a ſtream of fragrance.

The duke quitted the manſion, reanimated by the cheerfulneſs of morn, and purſued his journey. He could gain no intelligence of the fugitives. About noon he found himſelf in a beautifully romantic country; and having reached the ſummit of ſome wild cliffs, he

he reſted to view the picturesque imagery of the ſcene below. A ſhadowy ſequeſtered dell appeared buried deep among the rocks, and in the bottom was ſeen a lake, whoſe clear boſom reflected the impending cliffs, and the beautiful luxuriance of the overhanging ſhades.

But his attention was quickly called from the beauties of inanimate nature, to objects more intereſting; for he obſerved two perſons whom he inſtantly recollected to be the ſame that he had formerly purſued over the plains. They were ſeated on the margin of the lake, under the ſhade of ſome high trees at the foot of the rocks, and ſeemed partaking of a repaſt which was ſpread upon the graſs. Two horſes were grazing near. In the lady the duke ſaw the very air and ſhape of Julia, and his heart bounded at the ſight. They were ſeated with their backs to the cliffs upon which the duke ſtood, and he therefore ſurveyed them unobſerved.

They

They were now almoſt within his power, but the difficulty was how to deſcend the rocks, whoſe ſtupendous heights and craggy ſteeps ſeemed to render them impaſſable. He examined them with a ſcrutinizing eye, and at length eſpied, where the rock receded, a narrow winding ſort of path. He diſmounted, and ſome of his attendants doing the ſame, followed their lord down the cliffs, treading lightly, leſt their ſteps ſhould betray them. Immediately upon their reaching the bottom, they were perceived by the lady, who fled among the rocks, and was preſently purſued by the duke's people. The cavalier had no time to eſcape, but drew his ſword, and defended himſelf againſt the furious aſſault of the duke.

The combat was ſuſtained with much vigour and dexterity on both ſides for ſome minutes, when the duke received the point of his adverſary's ſword, and fell. The cavalier, endeavouring to eſcape,

cape, was ſeized by the duke's people, who now appeared with the fair fugitive;—but what was the diſappointment —the rage of the duke, when in the perſon of the lady he diſcovered a ſtranger! The aſtoniſhment was mutual, but the accompanying feelings were, in the different perſons, of a very oppoſite nature. In the duke, aſtoniſhment was heightened by vexation, and embittered by diſappointment:—in the lady, it was ſoftened by the joy of unexpected deliverance.

This lady was the younger daughter of a Sicilian nobleman, whoſe avarice, or neceſſities, had devoted her to a convent. To avoid the threatened fate, ſhe fled with the lover to whom her affections had long been engaged, and whoſe only fault, even in the eye of her father, was inferiority of birth. They were now on their way to the coaſt, whence they deſigned to paſs over to Italy, where the church would confirm the bonds

which their hearts had already formed. There the friends of the cavalier reſided, and with them they expected to find a ſecure retreat.

The duke, who was not materially wounded, after the firſt tranſport of his rage had ſubſided, ſuffered them to depart. Relieved from their fears, they joyfully ſet forward, leaving their late purſuer to the anguiſh of defeat, and fruitleſs endeavour. He was remounted on his horſe; and having diſpatched two of his people in ſearch of a houſe where he might obtain ſome relief, he proceeded ſlowly on his return to the caſtle of Mazzini.

It was not long ere he recollected a circumſtance which, in the firſt tumult of his diſappointment, had eſcaped him, but which ſo eſſentially affected the whole tenour of his hopes, as to make him again irreſolute how to proceed. He conſidered that, although theſe were the fugitives he had purſued over the

plains,

plains, they might not be the ſame who had been ſecreted in the cottage, and it was therefore poſſible that Julia might have been the perſon whom they had for ſome time followed from thence. This ſuggeſtion awakened his hopes, which were however quickly deſtroyed; for he remembered that the only perſons who could have ſatisfied his doubts, were now gone beyond the power of recall. To purſue Julia, when no traces of her flight remained, was abſurd; and he was therefore compelled to return to the marquis, as ignorant and more hopeleſs than he had left him. With much pain he reached the village which his emiſſaries had diſcovered, where fortunately he obtained ſome medical aſſiſtance. Here he was obliged by indiſpoſition to reſt. The anguiſh of his mind equalled that of his body. Thoſe impetuous paſſions which ſo ſtrongly marked his nature, were rouſed and exaſperated to a degree that

operated powerfully upon his conſtitution, and threatened him with the moſt alarming conſequences. The effect of his wound was heightened by the agitation of his mind; and a fever, which quickly aſſumed a very ſerious aſpect, co-oporated to endanger his life.

CHAP.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE caſtle of Mazzini was ſtill the ſcene of diſſenſion and miſery. The impatience and aſtoniſhment of the marquis being daily increaſed by the lengthened abſence of the duke, he diſpatched ſervants to the foreſt of Marentino, to enquire the occaſion of this circumſtance. They returned with intelligence, that neither Julia, the duke, nor any of his people were there. He therefore concluded, that his daughter had fled the cottage upon information of the approach of the duke, who, he believed, was ſtill engaged in the purſuit. With reſpect to Ferdinand, who yet pined in ſorrow and anxiety, in his dungeon, the rigour of the marquis's conduct was unabated. He apprehended that his ſon, if liberated, would quickly diſcover the retreat of Julia, and by his advice and aſſiſtance, confirm her in diſobedience.

Ferdinand in the ſtillneſs and ſolitude of his dungeon, brooded over the late calamity in gloomy ineffectual lamentation. The idea of Hippolitus—of Hippolitus murdered—aroſe to his imagination in buſy intruſion, and ſubdued the ſtrongeſt efforts of his fortitude. Julia too, his beloved ſiſter—unprotected—unfriended—might, even at the moment he lamented her, be ſinking under ſufferings dreadful to humanity. The airy ſchemes he once formed of future felicity, reſulting from the union of two perſons ſo juſtly dear to him—with the gay viſions of paſt happineſs—floated upon his fancy, and the luſtre they reflected, ſerved only to heighten by contraſt, the obſcurity and gloom of his preſent views. He had, however, a new ſubject of aſtoniſhment, which often withdrew his thoughts from their accuſtomed object, and ſubſtituted a ſenſation leſs painful, though ſcarcely leſs powerful. One night, as he lay ruminating

nating on the paſt in melancholy dejection, the ſtillneſs of the place was ſuddenly interrupted by a low and diſmal ſound. It returned at intervals in hollow ſighings, and ſeemed to come from ſome perſon in deep diſtreſs. So much did fear operate upon his mind, that he was uncertain whether it aroſe from within or from without. He looked round his dungeon, but could diſtinguiſh no object through the impenetrable darkneſs. As he liſtened in deep amazement, the ſound was repeated in moans more hollow. Terror now occupied his mind, and diſturbed his reaſon; he ſtarted from his poſture, and, determined to be ſatisfied whether any perſon beſide himſelf was in the dungeon, groped, with arms extended, along the walls. The place was empty; but coming to a particular ſpot, the ſound ſuddenly aroſe more diſtinctly to his ear. He called aloud, and aſked who was there; but received no anſwer. Soon after all was ſtill; and after liſten-

ing for ſome time without hearing the ſounds renewed, he laid himſelf down to ſleep. On the following day he mentioned to the man who brought him food what he had heard, and enquired concerning the noiſe. The ſervant appeared very much terrified, but could give no information that might in the leaſt account for the circumſtance, till he mentioned the vicinity of the dungeon to the ſouthern buildings. The dreadful relation formerly given by the marquis inſtantly recurred to the mind of Ferdinand, who did not heſitate to believe, that the moans he heard came from the reſtleſs ſpirit of the murdered della Campo. At this conviction, horror thrilled his nerves; but he remembered his oath, and was ſilent. His courage, however, yielded to the idea of paſſing anothor night alone in his priſon, where, if the vengeful ſpirit of the murdered ſhould appear, he might even die of the horror which its appearance would inſpire.

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The mind of Ferdinand was highly ſuperior to the general influence of ſuperſtition; but, in the preſent inſtance, ſuch ſtrong correlative circumſtances appeared, as compelled even incredulity to yield. He had himſelf heard ſtrange and awful ſounds in the forſaken ſouthern buildings; he received from his father a dreadful ſecret relative to them—a ſecret in which his honour, nay, even his life, was bound up. His father had alſo confeſſed, that he had himſelf there ſeen appearances which he could never after remember without horror, and which had occaſioned him to quit that part of the caſtle. All theſe recollections preſented to Ferdinand a chain of evidence too powerful to be reſiſted; and he could not doubt that the ſpirit of the dead had for once been permitted to reviſit the earth, and to call down vengeance on the deſcendants of the murderer.

This conviction occaſioned him a degree of horror, ſuch as no apprehenſion

of mortal powers could have excited; and he determined, if poſſible, to prevail on Peter to paſs the hours of midnight with him in his dungeon. The ſtrictneſs of Peter's fidelity yielded to the perſuaſions of Ferdinand, though no bribe could tempt him to incur the reſentment of the marquis, by permitting an eſcape. Ferdinand paſſed the day in lingering anxious expectation, and the return of night brought Peter to the dungeon. His kindneſs expoſed him to a danger which he had not foreſeen; for when ſeated in the dungeon alone with his priſoner, how eaſily might that priſoner have conquered him, and left him to pay his life to the fury of the marquis. He was preſerved by the humanity of Ferdinand, who inſtantly perceived his advantage, but diſdained to involve an innocent man in deſtruction, and ſpurned the ſuggeſtion from his mind.

Peter, whoſe friendſhip was ſtronger than

than his courage, trembled with apprehenſion as the hour drew nigh in which the groans had been heard on the preceding night. He recounted to Ferdinand a variety of terrific circumſtances, which exiſted only in the heated imaginations of his fellow ſervants, but which were ſtill admitted by them as facts. Among the reſt, he did not omit to mention the light and the figure which had been ſeen to iſſue from the ſouth tower on the night of Julia's intended elopement; a circumſtance which he embelliſhed with innumerable aggravations of fear and wonder. He concluded with deſcribing the general conſternation it had cauſed, and the conſequent behaviour of the marquis, who laughed at the fears of his people, yet condeſcended to quiet them by a formal review of the buildings whence their terror had originated. He related the adventure of the door which refuſed to yield, the ſounds which aroſe

from within, and the diſcovery of the fallen roof; but declared that neither he, nor any of his fellow-ſervants believed the noiſe, or the obſtruction proceeded from that, "becauſe, my lord," continued he, "the door ſeemed to be held only in one place; and as for the noiſe—O! Lord! I never ſhall forget what a noiſe it was!—it was a thouſand times louder than what any ſtones could make."

Ferdinand liſtened to this narrative in ſilent wonder! wonder not occaſioned by the adventure deſcribed, but by the hardihood and raſhneſs of the marquis, who had thus expoſed to the inſpection of his people, that dreadful ſpot which he knew from experience to be the haunt of an injured ſpirit; a ſpot which he had hitherto ſcrupulouſly concealed from human eye, and human curioſity; and which, for ſo many years, he had not dared even himſelf to enter. Peter went on, but was preſently interrupted by

by a hollow moan, which ſeemed to come from beneath the ground. "Bleſſed virgin!" exclaimed he: Ferdinand liſtened in awful expectation. A groan longer and more dreadful was repeated, when Peter ſtarting from his ſeat, and ſnatching up the lamp, ruſhed out of the dungeon. Ferdinand, who was left in total darkneſs, followed to the door, which the affrighted Peter had not ſtopped to faſten, but which had cloſed, and ſeemed held by a lock that could be opened only on the outſide. The ſenſations of Ferdinand, thus compelled to remain in the dungeon, are not to be imagined. The horrors of the night, whatever they were to be, he was to endure alone. By degrees, however, he ſeemed to acquire the valour of deſpair. The ſounds were repeated, at intervals, for near an hour, when ſilence returned, and remained undiſturbed during the reſt of the night. Ferdinand was alarmed by no appearance, and at length, overcome

come with anxiety and watching, he ſunk to repoſe.

On the following morning Peter returned to the dungeon, ſcarcely knowing what to expect, yet expecting ſomething very ſtrange, perhaps the murder, perhaps the ſupernatural diſappearance of his young lord. Full of theſe wild apprehenſions, he dared not venture thither alone, but perſuaded ſome of the ſervants, to whom he had communicated his terrors, to accompany him to the door. As they paſſed along he recollected, that in the terror of the preceding night he had forgot to faſten the door, and he now feared that his priſoner had made his eſcape without a miracle. He hurried to the door; and his ſurprize was extreme to find it faſtened. It inſtantly ſtruck him that this was the work of a ſupernatural power, when on calling aloud, he was anſwered by a voice from within. His abſurd fear did not ſuffer him to recognize the voice of

of Ferdinand, neither did he ſuppoſe that Ferdinand had failed to eſcape; he, therefore, attributed the voice to the being he had heard on the preceding night; and ſtarting back from the door, fled with his companions to the great hall. There the uproar occaſioned by their entrance called together a number of perſons, amongſt whom was the marquis, who was ſoon informed of the cauſe of alarm, with a long hiſtory of the circumſtances of the foregoing night. At this information, the marquis aſſumed a very ſtern look, and ſeverely reprimanded Peter for his imprudence, at the ſame time reproaching the other ſervants with their undutifulneſs in thus diſturbing his peace. He reminded them of the condeſcenſion he had practiſed to diſſipate their former terrors, and of the reſult of their examination. He then aſſured them, that ſince indulgence had only encouraged intruſion, he would for the future be ſevere;

vere; and concluded with declaring, that the firſt man who ſhould diſturb him with a repetition of ſuch ridiculous apprehenſions, or ſhould attempt to diſturb the peace of the caſtle by circulating theſe idle notions, ſhould be rigorouſly puniſhed, and baniſhed his dominions. They ſhrunk back at this reproof, and were ſilent. "Bring a torch," ſaid the marquis, "and ſhew me to the dungeon. I will once more condeſcend to confute you."

They obeyed, and deſcended with the marquis, who, arriving at the dungeon, inſtantly threw open the door, and diſcovered to the aſtoniſhed eyes of his attendants—Ferdinand!—He ſtarted with ſurprize at the entrance of his father thus attended. The marquis darting upon him a ſevere look, which he perfectly comprehended—"Now," cried he, turning to his people, "what do you ſee? My ſon, whom I myſelf placed here, and whoſe voice, which

anſwered

anſwered to your calls, you have tranſformed into unknown ſounds. " Speak, Ferdinand, and confirm what I ſay." Ferdinand, did ſo. " What dreadful ſpectre appeared to you laſt night? reſumed the marquis, looking ſtedfaſtly upon him: gratify theſe fellows with a deſcription of it, for they cannot exiſt without ſomething of the marvelous." " None, my lord," replied Ferdinand, who too well underſtood the manner of the marquis. " Tis well," cried the marquis, " and this is the laſt time," turning to his attendants, " that your folly ſhall be treated with ſo much lenity." He ceaſed to urge the ſubject, and forbore to aſk Ferdinand even one queſtion before his ſervants, concerning the nocturnal ſounds deſcribed by Peter. He quitted the dungeon with eyes ſteadily bent in anger and ſuſpicion upon Ferdinand. The marquis ſuſpected that the fears of his ſon had inadvertently betrayed to Peter a part of the ſecret intruſted to him, and

he

he artfully interrogated Peter with ſeeming careleſsneſs, concerning the circumſtances of the preceding night. From him he drew ſuch anſwers as honourably acquitted Ferdinand of indiſcretion, and relieved himſelf from tormenting apprehenſions.

The following night paſſed quietly away; neither ſound nor appearance diſturbed the peace of Ferdinand. The marquis, on the next day, thought proper to ſoften the ſeverity of his ſufferings, and he was removed from his dungeon to a room ſtrongly grated, but expoſed to the light of day.

Meanwhile a circumſtance occurred which increaſed the general diſcord, and threatened Emilia with the loſs of her laſt remaining comfort—the advice and conſolation of Madame de Menon. The marchioneſs, whoſe paſſion for the count de Vereza had at length yielded to abſence, and the preſſure of preſent circumſtances, now beſtowed her ſmiles upon

upon a young Italian cavalier, a viſitor at the caſtle, who poſſeſſed too much of the ſpirit of gallantry to permit a lady to languiſh in vain. The marquis, whoſe mind was occupied with other paſſions, was inſenſible to the miſconduct of his wife, who at all times had the addreſs to diſguiſe her vices beneath the gloſs of virtue and innocent freedom. The intrigue was diſcovered by Madame, who, having one day left a book in the oak parlour, returned thither in ſearch of it. As ſhe opened the door of the apartment, ſhe heard the voice of the cavalier in paſſionate exclamation; and on entering, diſcovered him riſing in ſome confuſion from the feet of the marchioneſs, who, darting at Madame a look of ſeverity, aroſe from her ſeat. Madame, ſhocked at what ſhe had ſeen, inſtantly retired, and buried in her own boſom that ſecret, the diſcovery of which would moſt eſſentially have poiſoned the peace of the marquis. The marchioneſs,

chioneſs, who was a ſtranger to the generoſity of ſentiment which actuated Madame de Menon, doubted not that ſhe would ſeize the moment of retaliation, and expoſe her conduct where moſt ſhe dreaded it ſhould be known. The conſciouſneſs of guilt tortured her with inceſſant fear of diſcovery, and from this period her whole attention was employed to diſlodge from the caſtle, the perſon to whom her character was committed. In this it was not difficult to ſucceed; for the delicacy of Madame's feelings made her quick to perceive, and to withdraw from a treatment unſuitable to the natural dignity of her character. She therefore reſolved to depart from the caſtle; but diſdaining to take an advantage even over a ſucceſsful enemy, ſhe determined to be ſilent on that ſubject which would inſtantly have transferred the triumph from her adverſary to herſelf. When the marquis, on hearing her determination

to

to retire, earneſtly enquired for the motive of her conduct, ſhe forbore to acquaint him with the real one, and left him to incertitude and diſappointment.

To Emilia this deſign occaſioned a diſtreſs which almoſt ſubdued the reſolution of Madame. Her tears and intreaties ſpoke the artleſs energy of ſorrow. In Madame ſhe loſt her only friend; and ſhe too well underſtood the value of that friend, to ſee her depart without feeling and expreſſing the deepeſt diſtreſs. From a ſtrong attachment to the memory of the mother, Madame had been induced to undertake the education of her daughters, whoſe engaging diſpoſitions had perpetuated a kind of hereditary affection. Regard for Emilia and Julia had alone for ſome time detained her at the caſtle; but this was now ſucceeded by the influence of conſiderations too powerful to be reſiſted. As her income was ſmall, it was her plan to retire to her native place, which

was

was ſituated in a diſtant part of the iſland, and there take up her reſidence in a convent.

Emilia ſaw the time of Madame's departure approach with increaſed diſtreſs. They left each other with a mutual ſorrow, which did honour to their hearts. When her laſt friend was gone, Emilia wandered through the forſaken apartments, where ſhe had been accuſtomed to converſe with Julia, and to receive conſolation and ſympathy from her dear inſtructreſs, with a kind of anguiſh known only to thoſe who have experienced a ſimilar ſituation. Madame purſued her journey with a heavy heart. Separated from the objects of her fondeſt affections, and from the ſcenes and occupations for which long habit had formed claims upon her heart, ſhe ſeemed without intereſt and without motive for exertion. The world appeared a wide and gloomy deſert, where no heart welcomed her with kindneſs—no counte-

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nance brightened into ſmiles at her approach. It was many years ſince ſhe quitted Calini—and in the interval, death had ſwept away the few friends ſhe left there. The future preſented a melancholy ſcene; but ſhe had the retroſpect of years ſpent in honourable endeavour and ſtrict integrity, to cheer her heart and encourage her hopes.

But her utmoſt endeavours were unable to repreſs the anxiety with which the uncertain fate of Julia overwhelmed her. Wild and terrific images aroſe to her imagination. Fancy drew the ſcene;—ſhe deepened the ſhades; and the terrific aſpect of the objects ſhe preſented was heightened by the obſcurity which involved them.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.